Macdonald Bards

KEITH NORMAN MACDONALD, M.D.

Oss 291

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MACDONALD BARDS

FROM

MEDIÆVAL TIMES.

BY

KEITH NORMAN MACDONALD, M.D.

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PREFACE.

WHILE my Papers on the "MacDonald Bards" were appearing in the "Oban Times," numerous correspondents expressed a wish to the author that they would be some day presented to the public in book form. Feeling certain that many outside the great Clan Donald may take an interest in these biographical sketches, they are now collected and placed in a permanent form, suitable for reference; and, brief as they are, they may be found of some service, containing as they do information not easily procurable elsewhere, especially to those who take a warm interest in the language and literature of the Highlands of Scotland.

K. N. MACDONALD.

21 CLARENDON CRESCENT,
EDINBURGH, *October 24th*, 1900.

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CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

Donald Donn p. 12, see also p. 95.

Silis Nighean Mhic Raonaill p. 18, corrected p. 92.

Nighean Mhic Aonghais Oig p. 19, also corrected p. 95.

Iain Dubh Mac 'Ic Ailein p. 19, continued p. 99.

P. 30, 16th line from top, for "flow," read "flaw."

P. 62, 11th line from top, for "Breaknish," read "Breakish."

P. 64, add to Foot Note, died in 1896; delete "some 7 or 8 years ago."

P. 66, last line, for "flay," read "flev."

P. 67, the witty dialogue was only related by Farquhar MacDonald; he died some 10 years ago.

P. 68, Angus MacDonald died September 9th, 1874.

P. 86, 6th line, for "Loch Treig," read "Glen Roy."

P. 89, 5th line from bottom, for "Logan," read "Laggan."

P. 89, 27th line from bottom, for "1493," read "1495."

P. 107, under the head of Robert MacDonald, add, he also composed an excellent poem of 8 stanzas, entitled "Opposite Characters," on—

> "The greedy prodigal and miser,
> And honest men who yet are wiser."

He died at Inverness in May, 1876.

P. 109, line 13 from bottom, left column, for "relayed," read "relaxed."

P. 111, 20th line from the top, for "1875," read "1878."

P. 113, Foot Note for "Lagan," read "Logan."

P. 118, The stanzas quoted from the Ledaig bard as having been composed to Flora MacDonald were not composed to her, but for the late Miss Campbell, Lochnell, who afterwards became the wife of Mr William Hosack, now of the Crofters Commission. The following fragment of a poem from "The Royalist" of April 16th, 1890, may take its place—

> Clan of the Isles, thy men could fail at need,
> But one brave woman that was born of thee,*
> Such full atonement for thy crime could make;
> Drummossie is forgotten for her deed,
> And all the race of Somerled shall be
> Redeemed and glorified for Flora's sake.

* Flora MacDonald was born at Milton, South Uist, not in Skye.

MACDONALD BARDS FROM MEDIÆVAL TIMES.

MacDonald Bards from Mediæval Times.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Bardic order was a very ancient institution among the Celts. They were originally members of the priesthood, and no class of society among the ancients has been more celebrated. "Whether we consider the influence which they possessed, their learning, or poetic genius, they are one of the most interesting order of antiquity, and worthy of our entire admiration."

The favourite songs of the bards are said to have been those celebrating the renown of their ancestors. The praises of great men were accompanied with a sort of religious feeling, which was not only useful in exhorting the living to deeds of heroism, but was supposed to be particularly pleasing to the spirits of those who had died in battle, and consequently became a sort of religious duty as well as an incentive to inspire youth with a generous spirit of emulation; and these, having often been sung and played upon the harp, must have had a powerful effect upon the listeners. Eginhart celebrates Charlemagne for committing to writing and to memory the songs on the wars and heroic virtues of his ancestors; and it is universally admitted that the Celtic bards influenced their hearers with a spirit of freedom and independence which has been handed down to us, and which exists among the Celtic populations even to the present day.

Their compositions commemorating the worth and exploits of heroes were a sort of national annals for preserving the memory of past transactions and of stimulating the youth to an imitation of the virtuous deeds of their ancestors. Their achievements were detailed so graphically, and national calamities portrayed in such affecting language, that their hearers were animated to deeds of the most daring heroism. So important and powerful an influence did they exert that Diodorus informs us the bards had power to prevent an engagement even when the spears were levelled for immediate action. The practice of animating warriors by chanting heroic poems is of most ancient origin. Tyrtaeus, the Lacedemonian, who flourished 680 years before the Christian era, composed five books of war verses, fragments of which are supposed to be still in existence. It was not only in actual war that the bards rehearsed their soul-stirring verses; each chief was constantly attended by a number of these poets, who entertained him at meals, and roused his ardour and his followers' courage with their powerful recitations, and the respect in which they were held shows how indispensable their services were reckoned.

In a publication by Cambray, member of the Celtic Academy at Paris, it is said that Druidic learning comprised 60,000 verses, which those of the first class were obliged to commit to memory; and Campion says that they spent ten or twenty years at their education, and talked Latin like a vulgar tongue. When a student was admitted to the profession of bardism he was honoured with the degree of "Ollamh," and received an honorary cap called a "barred."

In 192 the lawful price of the clothing of an "ollamh" and of an "anra" or second poet in Ireland, was fixed at five milch cows. In very ancient times the bards sang the praises of the good and valiant, and the Seanachies were the registrars of events and custodians of family history.

The Caledonian bards officiated as sort of aides-de-camp to the chief, communicating his orders to the chieftains and their followers. "When Fingal retired to view the battle, three bards attended him to bear his words to the chiefs." In later times the offices of bard and seanachie were often held by one person, and one of the duties was to preserve the genealogies and descent of the chiefs and the tribe, which were solemnly repeated at marriages, baptisms, and burials. The last purpose for which they were retained by the Highlanders was to preserve a faithful history of their respective clans. The office was also a hereditary one, which received its death-blow by the Government Act of 1748. Lachlan MacNeil, Mhic Lachlan, Mhic Domhnuill, Mhic Lachlan, Mhic Neil Mor, Mhic Domhnuill, of the surname of MacVurich, declared before Mr Roderick MacLeod, J.P., in presence of six clergymen and gentlemen, that he was the eighteenth in descent from "Muireadhach Albanich," who flourished in 1180 to 1222, whose posterity had officiated as bards to Clan Ranald, and that they had as salary for their office the farm of Staoiligary and four pennies of Drimisdale during fifteen generations.

Lachlan Mor MacVurich accompanied Donald, Lord of the Isles, at the battle of Haarlaw in 1411, and rehearsed his great poem to animate the followers of the Islay chief. This war song consists of 338 lines. The theme is—"O children of Conn of the hundred fights, remember hardihood in the time of battle." Round this subject Lachlan Mor had gathered some six hundred and fifty adverbial adjectives arranged alphabetically, and every one of them bearing specially and martially on the great theme of the song. It is altogether one of the most wonderful productions in the Gaelic language.

That poems of great antiquity existed at the period when Ossian sang, is evident from the frequent allusions he made to the "songs of old" and "bards of other years." "Thou shalt endure," said the bard of ancient days, "after the moss of time shall grow in Temora, after the blast of years shall roar in Selma." The Tain-bo or cattle spoil of Cualgne, commemorating an event that occurred about 1905 years ago, is believed to be the oldest poem in the Gaelic language. The "Albanic Duan," a poem recited at the coronation of Malcolm III. about 1056, and which is an undisputed relic, must have been composed from poems much anterior to its own age.

Hugh MacDonald, the seanachie of Sleat, has left on record an account of the crowning of the Lords of the Isles, as well as of the Council of Finlaggan of Isla, with its gradation of social rank. The proclamation of the Kings of Innse Gall was attended with much pomp and ceremony, at which the chief bard performed a rhetorical panegyric setting forth the ancient pedigree, valour, and liberality of the family as incentives to the young chieftain and fit for his imitation. The Bishop of Argyle and the Isles gave the benediction of the Church, while the chieftains of all the families and a ruler of the Isles were also present.

The newly-proclaimed king stood on a square stone 7 or 8 feet long, with a foot-mark cut in it, and this gave symbolic expression to the duty of walking uprightly and in the footsteps of his predecessors. He was clothed in a white habit as a sign of innocence and integrity, that he would be a light to his people, and maintain the true religion. Then a white rod was placed in his hand, indicating that he was to rule his people with discretion and sincerity; and, after the ceremony was over, mass was said and the blessing of the bishop and of priest given, and when they were dismissed the Lord of the Isles feasted them for a week, and gave liberally to the monks, poets, bards, and musicians.

Hugh MacDonald does not inform us where the coronation of the Lords of the Isles took place, but the inference to be drawn from his description is that "Eilean na comhairle," the island of council, was the scene of the ceremony. Donald of Haarlaw was crowned at Kildonan in Eigg, but it is more than probable that the islet on Loch Finlaggan, with its table of stone and its place of judgment, close by the larger isle, on

which stood the chapel and palace of the kings, must have been the scene of the historic rite. *

MacDonald of the Isles Council was held at the island on Loch Finlaggan in Isla, and consisted of 4 thanes, 4 armins, that is to say, 4 lords or sub-thanes; 4 bastards (e.g.) squires or men of competent estates who could not come up with the armins or thanes—that is, freeholders or men that had the land in factory or magee of the Rhinds of Isla, MacNicoll in Portree in Skye, and MacEachren, MacKay, and MacGillivray in Mull. There was a tablet of stone where the Council sat in the islet of Finlaggan, and the whole table, with the stone on which MacDonald sat, was carried away by Argyle with the bells that were at Icolmkill. There was, besides, a judge for every isle for deciding controversies, who got for his trouble an eleventh part of every action decided. MacFinnon was obliged to adjust weights and measures, and MacDuffie or MacPhie of Colonsay kept the records of the isles, thus showing that they had a regular system of government. There is a poem in the books of Clan Ranald on the Lords of the Isles by O. Henna, A.D. 1450, and one on John, Lord of the Isles, 1460; and in the Dean of Lismore's book there is also a poem on John, Lord of the Isles, and Angus, his son, by Gilliecallum mac an Ollaimh, 1480; one on the murder of Angus, son of John, Lord of the Isles, by John of Knoydart (probably a MacDonald), 1490; and one on MacDonalds, by Gilliecallum mac an Ollaimh, 1493.

After the period when Ossian, Orain, Ullin, Fergus, Fonar, Dauthal, and other unknown bards flourished, which reaches to the union of the Pictish and Scottish Kingdoms, there seems to have been for a long time few poets of any note, and it was not until about the end of the 13th century that a revival took place; but since then numerous bards of acknowledged excellence appeared from time to time, though many of their productions have not been handed down to us.

* See the History of the Clan Donald, p. 399.

DOMHNULL MAC FHIONNLAIDH NAN DAN

(DONALD MACDONALD).

The first MacDonald bard of any importance was Donald MacDonald, better known by the name of "Domhnull Mac Fhiunnlaidh nan Dàn," the famous Lochaber deer stalker and wolf hunter and author of the remarkable poem "A' chomhachag." He is supposed by some to have flourished before the invention of fire-arms, and by others as late as 1550. There is also some difficulty in making out whether he was a Lochaber or Badenoch man. The probability is that he hunted in both places. Tradition says that he was the most expert archer of his day, and at the time he lived, wolves were very troublesome in Lochaber, but he killed so many of them that before he died there was only one left alive in Scotland, which was shortly after killed in Strathglass by a woman.

He composed his famous song when old and unable to follow the chase, and it is the only one of his compositions which has been handed down to us. The poem "A' chomhachag" is a very remarkable one, and extends to 268 lines, and is in the form of a dialogue between himself and the owl. The occasion of the poem arose in the following manner:—He married a young woman when advanced in years, who turned out a regular "nagger." When the poet and his dog were both worn down from age and infirmities, she seems to have taken great pleasure in tormenting them, and took every opportunity of ill-using the poor dog. One day, finding an old and feeble owl, she brought it home, and, handing it to the old man, said—"This is a fitter companion for you than I am." Donald was not to be done, so he set to work and produced the famous poem, which has no rival of its kind in the language. In the 57th stanza he alludes to his "crooked rib," and hints gently that the birch rod would not be a bad thing for her. The music of "An Sealgair 's a chomhachag" is very quaint and beautiful, and has got a very ancient ring about it—far superior to anything produced at the present day.

The late Professor Blackie of Edinburgh, published a very good translation of this celebrated

poem in the *Celtic Magazine* for September, 1885, a few stanzas of which will be interesting to English speaking people, and give them an idea of the character of the poem, and what our early Highland bards could do before the days of plagiarism :—

" O poor old owl of the sron,
Hard is your bed this night in my room,
But that if you be as old as Clan Donald
You had cause enough in your day for gloom.

" I am as old as the oak on the moor,
By many a wintry blast o'er blown,
And many a sappling grew to a tree
Ere I became the old owl of the sron."

Sith you say you are so very old,
Confess your sins before you die,
I'll be the priest this night, and you'll
Tell all the truth, and nothing deny !

" I never broke into a church,
Or stole a kerchief, or told a lie,
I never gadded abroad with a beau,
But a chaste old lady at home was I.

I have seen Breham, the doughty old blade,
And Torridan with locks all grey,
Fergus I knew, both tall and stout,
Brawny boys, and brave were they,

I have seen the rough-skinned Alasdair,
Though but handsome was he in his day,
Full oft I listened from the crag,
When he came hunting up the brae.

After Alasdair, Angus I knew,
He was a blameless hand at his trade,
The mills at Larach were made by him,
And better mills no where, never were made."

Wild times were in Lochaber, I trow,
Harrying east, and harrying west,
When you were frowning with eye-brow grim,
A little brown bird, in a little brown nest.

" Some of my sires betwixt the Fearsaid
And the Insch were lodged full well,
And some at Deating were nightly heard,
Hooting at sound of the vesper bell.

And when I saw the plundering clans,
Striking and slaying, and driving about ;
On the nodding cliff I took my stand,
And there I kept a safe look out."

Crag of my heart ! O nodding cliff !
Joy of all birds, so fresh and fair ;
'Tis there I was born, and there the stag
Stands and snuffs the breezy air.

O crag ! the home of the chase,
Where I would sit and hear the bay
Of the eager hounds, as they drove the deer
Down the steep and narrow way.

And the scream of the eagles from the scour,
And swan and cuckoo with floating song,
And sweeter than these the belling to hear
Of the dappled young deer as they trotted along!

Pleasant to hear was the rustle of leaves
On the sheer-sided mountain's breast,
When the antlered hind on green wood shade,
At heat of noon lay down to rest, &c., &c.

There are 67 stanzas of 4 lines in each, making 268 lines in all in the original, 63 stanzas of which have been translated.

The Rev. Mr MacLean Sinclair in his " Gaelic Bards from 1411 to 1715," remarks with regard to the origin of this poem that when Dòmhnull MacFhionnlaidh was an old man and unable to hunt the deer, the young laird of Keppoch Raonall Gòrach invited his principal followers to an entertainment at Taigh-nam-fleadh. The aged bard was not asked, but started of his own accord and went as far as Taigh-na-fuine. Finding, however, that he was not wanted at the entertainment, he turned home. On his way back, he heard an owl in the woods of Strone, and finding it as old and lonely as himself, he gave vent to his poetical inspiration.

There is also an account of our famous bard in *The Gael*, vol. v., p. 328, signed " Diarmid," said to have been contributed by the late Donald MacPherson, a Lochaber man, who was for a long time employed in the Advocate's library in Edinburgh. His account is in Gaelic, and reads very much like a sgeulachd, but one thing he has apparently settled, viz.—that the author of " The Hunter and the Owl," was a Lochaber man. As the work is out of print, and not easily procurable I shall give some extracts from it.

" It has been the fortune of Donald, son of Finlay, that more than one district has claimed kinship with him. Some say that he was of the folk of Braemar, others that he was a native of Glencoe, and there are those who assert that the age in which he lived is unknown. But there is one point on which all are agreed—and it is this—that it was he who composed the " Song of the Owl." Any one acquainted with the history of the clans, and considers this poem attentively, will perceive that about 300 years have elapsed since Donald lived, and that he must have had his abode in Brae-Lochaber. I remember hearing old men talk about Donald, son of Finlay. According to their account he was of the people of Glencoe, and his father, Finlay, was standard bearer to *Mac-'ic Iain*—son of John MacDonald of Glencoe. His mother was a native of Lochaber. His maternal grandfather was bard and huntsman to *Mac'ic-Raonuill* (MacDonald of Keppoch), and his home was at Creag-Guanach. It was with him that Donald received his early training, so that he was thus brought up from his early youth to an acquaintance with poetry and the chase, so he himself says—

" Bha mi bho'n a rugadh mi riabh,
Ann an caidreamh fhiadh 'us earb."

I was ever since I was born,
In fellowship with deer and roe.

When his father died he went to live at Glencoe, but it is not known how long he remained there.

From the poem it will be understood that he and his chief had some disagreement ; whatever the cause may have been Donald left " Eoin-á-Tigh-na-Creige," vowing that he would never return, which declaration was fulfilled, for he never went there again. When his grandfather became old and infirm he returned to Creag-Guanach, and he was appointed bard and huntsman to the chief, Mac 'ic-Raonuill, who gave him two farms, *Creag-Guanach* and *Fearsaid Riabhach*. In the summer he would stay in a shieling at Creag-Guanach, at the upper end of Loch Treig, and at the other end of the loch, at Fearsaid, he made his winter residence. (Both places are well-known to the writer. His first experience of Loch Treig was in 1861, when a gamekeeper carried him seven times across Loch Treig River in the middle of the night, taking short cuts for our destination.) But to return to our poet. When he found himself in comfortable circumstances he married a daughter of MacDonald, Bràghad, but they were not long together as she died soon after. He had one daughter, Mary, who kept house for him, and he never married a second time.

One occasion when stalking a stately stag that frequented Gual-'an Liathghiuthais—shoulder of Grey Pine, as misfortune would have it who was on the hunting mountain but Dunnachadh Dubh-a-Churraic (Black Duncan of the Cap) and his men, and before Donald was aware of it they had him firmly in their grasp, and he was obliged to accompany them to Fionn Lairig ; as they went along they saw a hind lying beside a well or spring, and they said derisively to him, we shall let you have your liberty if you will send an arrow through the right eye of the hind. Donald bent his bow but missed, when he failed to touch her he uttered a harsh whistle, and the hind lifted her head. He repeated the sound and she came in front of him, then he took aim keeping the arrow to his eye, and there was not an inch from the point of the shaft to the bend that was not immersed (gun air a bhàthadh, literally drowned) in the blood of the hind. When the Knight (Black Duncan) beheld how well he had done he set him free, and not only that, but invited him to come and stay with himself for the rest of his days. Donald thanked him, saying that should he be given Fionn Lairig altogether he could never forsake Loch Treig and the deer. At that time a considerable part of Lochaber was covered with great forests, and wolves were accordingly met there.

When he became aged he could hardly move between the bed and the fireside, but his hunting instinct never left him, for once in the twilight, while looking out at the window towards the mountain he observed a grand stag coming towards the garden behind the house. His daughter Mary was sitting by the fireside and heard her father's oppressed breathing, and hastily asked him what he was feeling, " Hush ! " he replied, " get me my bow." She thought that he had become delirious as the bow had been hanging up —air an fharadh—on the hens roost for a long time, but she took it down. " Bend it," said he —" Cuir air lùgh e "—" Alas," said Mary, " there is not a man in Lochaber to-day who can bend it," " try," said her father, showing her how to do it ; at length she succeeded. " Where are the arrows ? " he said. Mary brought the quiver and put it on his knee. Donald chose an arrow (Balg Shaighead) and the stag fell. " God be thanked," he exclaimed, " I had no expectation of such success for ever more, but it is my last feat of hunting." He commanded that he was to be buried in the skin of this deer, and his grave to be made at the door of the Church with face turned towards " Còdhearg," a mountain rising above Fearsaid. It is needless to state that his wish was complied with. The grave may be seen to this day—air bile na bruaich—by the edge of the hillock, at the Church of Gille Chaorral, and a grave stone upon it which he himself carried on his back from the moorland—" na Monaidhnean " —and it is alleged that it was he who said :—

" Fhir a cheumas air mo lic,
Sealt a rithisd as do dhéigh,
'S cuimhnich ged tha mi 's an uaigh,
Gu'n robh mi uair cho luath riut fhéin "

" O man who steps upon my grave stone,
Look again—behind—into the past,
And remember that though I am in the grave,
I was once as fleet of foot as thou,"

He was very indulgent to his daughter Mary, and one day between fun and earnest she asked him to give her the goats he possessed (he had sheep and black cattle as well), but he refused and said—" dead or alive, for me, I will not part with the goats." This gave rise to an amusing " port " (song), being sung about Donald, son of Finlay's goats.

Chorus—

Eadarainn a-ho, o-ha
Gobhair Dho' ill 'ic Fhionnlaidh,
Eadarainn a-ho, o-ha
Gobhair Dho' ill 'ic Fhionnlaidh,
Eadarainn a-ho, o-ha,
Gobhair mo chridhe 's mo ghràidh,
Eadarainn a-ho, o-ha,
Gobhair Dho' ill 'ic Fhionnlaidh.

Verse—

'S e gaol nan caorach 's nan gobhar,
Gaol nan caorach 's nan gobhar,
Gaol nan caorach 's nan gobhar,
Gobhar Dho' ill ' ic Fhionnlaidh,
'S e gaol nan caorach 's nan gobhar,
'Us mo làmh-sa 'bhi ga'm bleoghann.
Gaol nan caorach 's nan gobhair,
Gobhair Dho' ill 'ic Fhionnlaidh.
Eadarainn, &c.

In his famous poem to the owl the poet compares the owl to himself in his dialogue with her. He breaks out in praise of "Creag-Guanach," and talks of how fleeting is this world and life. He praises the deer, and addresses his favourite white hound with affection, and ends with some words of reproach to old age for taking away his strength.

IAIN LOM

(JOHN MACDONALD).

The next Clan bard was John MacDonald—"Iain Lom"—the celebrated Lochaber bard and politician, who lived in the reigns of Charles I. and II., and died at an advanced age about 1709 or 1710. He was commonly called "Iain Lom," or Bare John, on account of his never having had any hair upon his face, or from his acuteness and severity when occasion demanded freedom of speech. He was born in the Braes of Lochaber about 1624, and was a great great-grandson of John Ailein, fourth MacDonald of Keppoch. He was also sometimes called "Iain Manntach," on account of an impediment in his speech. The Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair, of Prince Edward Island, who published an excellent collection of his poems and songs in 1895, says that he was present at the battle of "Stron-a-chlachain," near Loch Tay, in 1640, where his father and Angus MacDonald—Aonghas MacRaonuill Oig—of Keppoch were killed. This Aonghas MacRaonuill Oig was mortally wounded at the battle of Stron-a-chlachain, and was taken by his men to a bothy in Coire-a-Choramaig, where, unfortunately, he was discovered by the enemy and killed, hence the Lochaber song "Coire-a-Choramaig," from the death having taken place there. He must have been then at least sixteen years of age, probably more, so in all likelihood he was born as early as 1620. Being a man of superior talents and possessing a large amount of general information he was intimately acquainted with all the political plans and movements of his day, and like the rest of his countrymen in the Braes of Lochaber he was a Roman Catholic, a keen Jacobite, and a very influential member of his party, while his earnestness and determination caused him to be feared and respected by those who knew him.

Gifted with poetic powers of a very high order, and extraordinary power of invective, he composed a number of very valuable poems, songs, and elegies, which were taken down from oral recitation long after the poet's death. The first thing that brought him into notice, beyond the confines of Lochaber, was the active part he took in punishing the murderers of the lawful heir of Keppoch and his brother. This massacre was perpetrated by the cousins of the youths about 1663. "Iain Lom" perceiving that the minds of the people were alienated from the lawful heir in his absence, he and his younger brother having been sent abroad for their education during their minority, and the affairs being entrusted to their cousins, who took advantage of the opportunity in establishing themselves by the power and authority they exercised in administering his affairs, and, in fact, suspecting what was likely to happen, did all in his power to prevent it and stood single-handed in defence of the right. Failing in his attempts to awaken the people to a sense of their duty, he applied to the most potent neighbour, the Chief of Glengarry, but the latter declined to interfere in the affairs of a celebrated branch of the Clan Dughaill, and there was no other who could have aided him with any prospect of success. In this dilemma, and still determined that the murderers should be punished, and being disappointed with the action of Glengarry, he invoked the muse and began praising Sir Donald Gorm Og of Sleat and his son, Sir James, confident that the cause he espoused was honourable, and trusting to his own powers of persuasion, his overtures were favourably received by Sir James MacDonald, and measures were concerted for punishing the murderers, which met with Sir James's approval, showing the judgment and sagacity of the faithful clansman. A person was sent to North Uist with a message to Archibald MacDonald, "An Ciaran Mapach," brother of Sir James MacDonald, and a poet as well as a soldier, requesting him to bring a company of chosen men to the mainland, where he would meet with the Lochaber bard, who was to be his guide and instructor in future proceedings.

In order to understand the state of affairs at this juncture, I may mention that "Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch—Alasdair nan cleas—had three sons, Raonull Og, Domhnull Glas, and Alasdair Buidhe. He was succeeded by his son Raonull Og, who was succeeded by his son Angus. Angus who was killed at Stron-a-Chlachain in 1640, was succeeded by Domhnull Glas, second son of Alasdair nan cleas. Donald Glas married a daughter of Forester of Kilbaggie, in Clackmannanshire, by whom he had two sons, Alex-

ander and Ronald. Alexander—Alasdair Mòr—succeeded his father. Alasdair Buidhe, third son of Alexander nan Cleas, had acted as tutor of Keppoch for a number of years. He was an ambitious, selfish man, and resolved to get rid of his two nephews, Alexander and Ronald, by assassination, in order to secure the chieftainship of the MacDonalds of Keppoch for himself. He had five sons—Allan, Archibald, Alexander, Donald, and Ronald. Allan and Donald, assisted by Alasdair Ruadh Mac Dhughaill of Inarlaire (Inverlair), and his six sons, went stealthily to Keppoch House, and murdered Alasdair Mòr and his brother Ronald, who was only a young boy at the time. This horrible massacre was committed in September, 1663. 'Iain Lom's' poem on the occasion—"Mort na Ceapaich"—extends to 184 lines, and is a beautiful poem; it shows the author at his best. He stands before us as a tender-hearted and faithful friend, a preacher of truth and righteousness, and a man of firm faith in a just God."

The "Sìol Dùghaill" from which Alasdair Ruadh, the instigator of the Keppoch murders was descended, were MacDonalds who came from Moidart to Lochaber, about 1547. Alasdair Ruadh was the principal man among them in Alasdair Buidhe's time, and lived as already mentioned at Inverlair. So well had the poet and his coadjutors laid their plans, chief of whom was the "Ciaran Mapach," that the assassins were surprised in their beds in September, 1665, and had summary justice inflicted upon them—seven in all—Alasdair Ruadh and his six sons. By dawn next day, so goes the traditional story, at Keppoch, their heads were laid at the feet of Lord MacDonell* at Invergarry Castle, by "An Ciaran Mapach," "Iain Lom," and the Sleat or Uist men. On their way to Invergarry the heads were washed in a spring or well, since called "Tobar nan Ceann"—the well of the heads—and over which a chieftain representative of Lord MacDonell erected a monument with a long inscription upon it in Gaelic. Many is the time the writer has ridden past this "Tobar nan Ceann," at all hours of the day and night and viewed it, and the old tree at Invergarry on which one of the Glengarry's used to hang some of his subjects with intense interest and wonder. From Invergarry John Lom and his men proceeded to Inverness by direction of Lord MacDonell, and an incident occurred on the way which shows the stern and satirical character of our poet. The man who carried the creel with the heads on arrival at the Inn of Clnanmore in Glenurquhart, threw it carelessly down, whereupon there was a rattling of the heads. John exclaimed on hearing it—"Ud! ud! nach còrd sibh! nach còrd sibh! 's gur cloinn chàirdean sibh!" ("What! what! wont you agree; wont you agree, and you being so near a kin."†) Soon after the above event the poet and Glengarry were reconciled. The chief well knew the influence which the poet exercised in the country, and had the prudence not to despise one so skilled in diplomacy. No one of his rank could command greater respect and deference. He seems to have been born for the age in which he lived, and the influence which he possessed and swayed amongst all classes was very remarkable. He entered heart and soul into whatever cause he espoused, and was in consequence both feared and respected. It is alleged of him that he was no soldier, yet he managed to set people against each other. Men of influence throughout the country knew this as well as the chieftains at a distance, and dreaded his influence accordingly.

So great was his power as an indispensable agent to his friends that he received a yearly pension from Charles II., who made him his Gaelic poet laureate. He was the means of bringing together the armies of Montrose and Argyll at the battle of Inverlochy, which was fought on Sunday, 2nd February, 1645, where so many of the heads of the families of the Clan Campbell were slain. The Campbells on hearing of the intention of their enemies to make a second raid on their country, marched north to prevent that course being taken. "Iain Lom" was aware of what was taking place, and hastened or sent a message to the army of Montrose at Fort Augustus with the intelligence that the Campbells were in Lochaber, numbering 3000 strong, under the Marquis of Argyll, who was burning and laying waste the country.

Montrose marched back with all possible speed, and arrived at Glen Nevis on the evening of February 1st, 1645, and the battle was fought next day. In the meantime, Argyll, after committing his army to the charge of his cousin, Campbell of Auchinbreck, abandoned his men, by going during the night on board a boat in the loch, excusing himself by alleging his incapacity to enter the field of battle, in consequence of a contusion he had received by a fall. Montrose's army consisted of the Irishmen who came over to Scotland with Alasdair Mac-Cholla, the MacDonalds, the Stewarts and Robertsons of Athole the Farquharsons, Camerons, and others. Montrose won a signal victory. He lost only 8 men, Lord Ogilvie, a Captain Brian, and 6 privates.

* Æneas MacDonell, 9th of Glengarry was raised to the Scottish Peerage in 1660 by the title of Lord MacDonell and Aros.

† See Rev. Allan Sinclair's paper in *Celtic Magazine*. January, 1880.

Argyll lost 14 barons of his own clan, and 1500 common soldiers. Our poet having acted as guide to Alasdair Mac-Cholla in search of the Campbells, and not finding them at first, he began to suspect his guide, and declared that if he deceived him he would hang him on the first tree he met, "unless," answered the poet, "you find all the Campbells before this time to-morrow, you may do so." Before the battle commenced, Mac-Cholla said, "Make ready, John, you shall march along with me to the fight." The poet, who was a bit of a coward, was at his wit's end, but the thought immediately struck him that "discretion was the better part of valour," and replied, "If I go along with you to-day and fall in battle, who will sing thy praises to-morrow? Go thou, Alasdair, and exert thyself as usual, and I shall sing thy feats, and celebrate thy prowess in martial strains." "You are all right, John," replied the other, and left him in a place of safety where he could witness the engagement. The poet accordingly had a full view of the contest from the top of Inverlochy Castle, which he has immortalised in his beautiful song—"Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh"—

Chorus—Hi rim, ho ro, ho ro leatha,
Hi rim, ho ro, ho ro leatha,
Hi rim, ho ro, ho ro leatha,
Chaidh an latha le Clann Dòmhnuill.

1st Verse—

'N cuala sibh an turas ainmeil,
'Thug Alastair mac Cholla dh-'Albainn;
Rinneadh leis pronnadh is marbhadh,
'S leagadh leis coilcach Strath-Bhalgaidh.
Hi rim, ho, etc.

6th Verse—

Dhìrich mi moch maduin cheòraich,
Gu braigh' caisteal Inbhir-Lòchaidh;
Chunnaic mi 'n t-arm a' dol an òrdugh,
'S bha buaidh a' bhlàir le Clann-Dòmhnuill.
Hi rim, ho, etc.

We are indebted to Mrs MacDonell, Keppoch, for having preserved a good set of this splendid song. The natives of the Braes of Lochaber still repeat these heroic verses to which the writer has often listened with great interest. The beauty of the language, and the boldness of expression, have seldom been equalled, and, perhaps, never surpassed.

The poet's hatred of the Campbells was unbounded, and his satire against them on all occasions was most bitter. So keenly did Argyll feel this, and the influence and ridicule of such a bard, that he offered a considerable reward for his head. So confident was MacDonald of his own influence and the sacred character of a bard, that he repaired to Inveraray and delivered himself up to the Marquis demanding his reward, Argyll received him courteously, and took him through the castle treating him with the respect due to so influential a guest. MacKenzie in his beauties of Gaelic poetry, relates the following anecdote in connection with his visit to Inveraray Castle. On entering a room hung round with the heads of blackcock, his Grace asked John—"Am fac thu riamh Iain an uiread sin de choilich dhubha an aon àite?" "Chunnaic," ars Iain, "C'àite?" "An Inbhir-Lòchaidh," "A! Iain, Iain, cha sguir thu gu bràch de chagnadh nan Caimbeulach?" "'Se 's duilich leam," ars Iain, "nach urradh mi g'an slugadh," i.e., "Have you ever seen, John, so many blackcock together?" "Yes," replied John, "Where?" asked his Grace, "At Inverlochy," returned the poet, alluding to the slaughter of the Campbells on that memorable day. "Ah! John, John," added his Grace, "will you never cease gnawing at the Campbells." "I am sorry," replied John, "that I could not swallow them." He composed upwards of 40 poems, songs, and elegies, and was really one of our first great poets. Many of his pieces are marked by great tenderness of feeling and religious sentiment, and others are full of satire. Of all his poems "Blàr Inbhir-Lòchaidh"—the battle of Inverlochy—is perhaps the most popular, one reason being that the air is a very taking one, and the words are graphic, and another reason, especially among the MacDonalds is, because the Campbells got slain in great numbers at the battle.

His lament for Angus MacDonald of Keppoch "Cumha Aonghuis Mhic Raonuill Oig" is a very fine composition. It consists of 10 verses of 3 lines in each verse, and contains some very tender passages. It is strange that there is no lament for his own father, "Domhnull Mac Iain mhic Dhomhnuill mhic Iain Ailein," who was killed at the same time.

In connection with his "Oran do Dhomhnall Gorm òg of Sleat," it may be mentioned that Donald MacDonald, 6th of Sleat, married Mary, daughter of Hector Mòr MacLean of Duart, by whom he had three sons, Donald, Archibald, and Alexander. He died in 1585. Donald, 7th of Sleat, Domhnall Gorm Mòr, died without issue in 1616. Archibald married Margaret, daughter of Angus MacDonald of Isla, by whom he had Donald. Donald (Domhnall Gorm Og), succeeded his uncle in Sleat. He was created a baronet in 1625 and died in 1643.*

His "Cumha Mhontrois," elegy on the death of Montrose, extends to 56 lines. James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, was the only son of John, fourth earl of Montrose, and Margaret Ruthven,

* Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's collected poems of "Iain Lom."

daughter of the Earl of Gowrie. He succeeded his father as Earl of Montrose in 1626. He married in November, 1629, Magdalene Carnegie, daughter of the Earl of Southesk, by whom he had three sons, and was hanged in Edinburgh, 27th May, 1650. He had been arrested by Neil MacLeod, 11th of Assynt, at Carbiesdale, in Ross-shire, on April 27th, 1650, who received a sum of money and 400 bolls of meal as a reward for his services. This Neil MacLeod afterwards lost his estate and died without issue in 1691. Served him right.

"Tilleadh an Dara Righ Tearlach,"—the return of King Charles II.—extends to 60 lines, and is a fine composition. Charles II. returned to Britain in 1660, entered London on 29th May, was crowned in Westminster Abbey, April 23rd, 1661, and the Marquis of Argyll was executed in Edinburgh, 27th May, 1661.

His elegy on the murdered Keppochs—"Cumha Do Mhac Mhic—Raonaill, na Ceapaich, agus a Bhràthair a chaidh a mhort 's a' Bhliadna 1663," consists of 70 lines. One would have expected a longer song for his coadjutor, "An Ciaran Mapach," it consists of 11 verses only, of 4 lines in each verse. The third line in the 1st stanza—

"Glòir do Dhia 's do dh-Iarla Shifort,"

refers to his having been under the Earl of Seaforth's protection. It seems that after the Keppoch murders the poet was persecuted and had to fly for his life to Ross-shire, where he got a place from Seaforth in Glensheal, where he and his family might reside until the murderers could be apprehended, as Seaforth, at the poet's request, had petitioned Government for carrying that point into effect. The Government finding it impossible to bring the murderers to justice in a legal way, sent a "commission of fire and sword" to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat, signed by the Duke of Hamilton, Marquis of Montrose, the Earl of Eglinton, and other six of the Privy Council, hence the relations that existed between the poet and Sir James. Among his other poems are "Rannan Eadar Domhnull Gruamach agus Iain Lom," "Iorram," or boat song, for Sir James Mòr MacDonald, of 78 lines, an elegy on the same of 39 lines, and a long song of 128 lines to Angus MacDonald of Glengarry, who was forfeited by Cromwell in 1651. His estate was given to the Marquis of Argyll, who gave it to Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, who gave it to the original owner. Glengarry claimed the chiefship of the whole of the Clan Donald. This led to a dispute with Sir James MacDonald of Sleat. There is also an "Oran" (song) and "Marbhrann" (elegy) to Lord MacDonell of Glengarry, who died in 1682. One to MacDonald of Sleat of 17 verses. This was Sir Donald MacDonald who married in 1662, Mary, daughter of Robert Douglas, third Earl of Morton. The poet does not speak of him as the chief of the MacDonalds, but as captain of the clan. There is also a very long and eulogistic song to the Marquis of Athole, consisting of 21 verses, of 8 lines in each verse, extending to 168 lines.

In his "Cumha do Ghilleasbuig na Ceapaich," Maclean Sinclair is of opinion that the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses may or may not belong to the poem. The 13th verse refers to Raonull Og, and the 14th verse to his son, Angus. The 15th may refer to Donald Glas and his murdered sons, while the 16th may refer to Alasdair Buidhe, who was drowned in the Spean river. His song on the union between England and Scotland, which took place in 1707, and was exceedingly unpopular in Scotland, extends to 112 lines, and his elegy on the death of Sir Donald MacDonald, tenth of Sleat, who died February 5th, 1695, extends to 96 lines. There is also a doubtful elegy of 96 lines entitled "Marbhrann do dh-Alasdair Dubh Ghlinne-Garaidh. This Alasdair Dubh of Glengarry died in 1724. If John Lom was living at that time he would have been 100 years of age, which is improbable. It is more likely that he died about 1710 as already stated, even then he would have been 86 at least, or 90 if he were born as early as 1620. There were other very good poems by our voluminous author, but it would occupy too much space to notice them all. Our poet lived a *stormy* life full of danger, and political and domestic trouble, and died at a good old age, full of years, and honour, and fame, and was buried at Tom-Aingil in the Braes of Lochaber, where his grave used to be pointed out to the curious. Another bard, Alex. MacDonald of Glencoe, composed an elegy to him when standing on his grave† beginning thus—

'Na shineadh an sud fo na pluic,
Tha gaol an Leòmhainn 's fuath an Tuirc.

† A handsome monument was erected over his grave some years ago.

In MacPherson's "Dunaire" it is said that when John Lom was buried, Coll of Keppoch said to Angus Mac-Alasdair Ruaidh of Glencoe, "Let us now hear what you have got to say," and he produced the following elegy:—

Chunna mi criech air m' fhear cinnidh,
'G a chàramh an diugh 'an Tom-Aingeal;
Iuchair nam bàrd—righ nam filidh‡—
Dia dheanamh sith ri d'anam.

B' fhuath leat Màiri b'fhuath leat Uilleam,
'S b'fhuath leat Siol-Diarmaid uile,
'S a h-uile h-aon nach biodh rioghail
Dh'innseadh tu dhaibh e gun iarraidh.

Tha gaol an Leòghainn, 's fuath an Tuirc,
Anns an ùaigh 's am bheil do chorp,
Gu'n tugadh Dia mathanas dut
Bha thu dioghaltach 's an olc!

‡ King of poets.

MAC IAIN LUIM (JOHN LOM'S SON).

John Lom's son fought under Dundee at the battle of Killiecrankie in 1687. It is said that he was a captain. He was killed in a duel by Donald Donn Mac Fhir-Bhothfhiunntain, about 1690. The duel was fought at High Bridge about eight miles from Fort William. He was a good poet, though of course not so famous as his father. In fact, he had no time to become famous as he must have been killed when comparatively a young man. The following song was composed by him, but owing to the fame of his father few of his productions have been preserved :—

"Latha Raon Ruari."

An Raon-Ruari so 'bha'nn
B' lìonmhor ceann is colunn gu làr,
Mòran Ghàidheal is Ghall
Bh' air chall's an uilinn ri bàir.
'Nuair a thàinig an clann
'Nan deann an deireadh an là,
Cha b' e tilleadh gun chall
A shanntaich gillean mo ghràidh.

Bha an t-Alastair Ciar
Gu dian le 'bhrataichean ;
Ann an àm dol a sìos
Cha b'mhiann leis fuireach 'nan déigh :
Cha bu chlaidheamh no sgiath
'Bu dìon do'n churaidh 'bha treun ;
Cò a chumadh ris strìth,
'S an Righ mar spionnadh d' a sgéith ?

Is bha Dòmhnall nan Dùn
Gu dlùth air uilinn a' bhàir ;
Bha 'chuid ghillean ri 'chùl,
'S cha seachnadh iad cùis le dàil :
Bha ùr ghasda mo rùin
'G 'ur leanailt gu dlùth mu'n sàil,
Is mar bhuineadh da'n cliù,
Ri casgairt le lùths nan làmh.

There are other four verses of the above song equally good, but as the air is not known to which it was sung, it has not so much interest at the present day.

DOMHNULL DONN (BROWN DONALD).

Donald MacDonald, poet and politician, commonly called "Donald Donn," was of the house of Bohuntin and Aberarder, a branch of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, the second son of John MacDonald, fourth of Bohuntin, and uncle to Gilleasbuig of Keppoch. His mother was a daughter of Cameron of Glenmailie. Donald was not on friendly terms with his chief, Coll of Keppoch, or "Iain Lom," whose son, as already mentioned, he had killed in a duel. Like many of his countrymen he was a "creachadair," or raider, his exploits in which direction history fails to record. There is, in fact, not very much known about him. It seems that he was in love with a daughter of the chief of the Grants, whose seat was at Glenurquhart, but the Grants would not hear of the match on account of his poverty, though of high lineage. The poet and his lady-love having planned an elopement, Donald to be at hand hid himself in a cave on the north side of Lochness, near "Réilig Ghorraidh." Here he was to remain until Miss Grant was able to join him, but Donald's secret and retreat were betrayed to the brother of his love, and he was decoyed into a house in the neighbourhood of the castle, by a pretended message from Miss Grant. Donald, thrown off his guard by the kindness and hospitality of the lady's pretended confidant, was prevailed on, not only to drink freely, but also to sleep in the barn. No sooner was he asleep than his sword and target were removed by his treacherous host, hence, when his foes came upon him in the morning, he had no weapon but his gun, which missed fire, so that he was literally unarmed, on which he composed "Mìle mallachd gu bràth air a' ghunna mar arm," &c. Donald expected that his clan would interfere and pay his éirig † fine, but the bad terms he was on with his chief, and Iain Lom, prevented that. The night before his execution while in prison, he composed the beautiful song :—

'S truagh a Righ ! Mo nighean Donn,
Nach robh mi thall 'am Muile leat,
Far am faighinn iasg is sithionn fhéidh,
'S cha bhiodh, a chiall, oirnn uireasaibh.

According to tradition Donald's sister was present at his execution, and the head articulated, after being struck off, the words, "A Cheit tog an ceann," "Kate, take up the head." So far as I am aware only a few of his other songs have been preserved. Donald Donn was a handsome man, a brave warrior, a good poet, and an excellent harper. He was executed in 1691.

His allusion to Mull in "'S truagh a Righ," etc., was probably on account of his having planned his elopement for that locality ; he would be safer on an island than on the mainland. MacLean Sinclair says that he had a son by a girl in Sutherlandshire—"An nighean donn a bha 'n Cataobh"—and a daughter by another girl, and that the latter paid him a visit while in prison, and that it was to her he addressed the

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* See MacLean Sinclair's Bards, 1411 to 1715.

† The "éirig," or ransom, was really for the killing of a person of one's own nation, and dates back to the time of the Druids and was determined by the quality, or birth of the individual. One hundred and forty cows was the "éirig" of an Earl ; one hundred that of an Earl's son or thane ; and sixteen of a villain or plebeian. Tacitus tells us that the same custom prevailed among the ancient Germans—"Luitur homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero, pars civitati pars propinquis."

poem, "'S truagh, a righ! mo nighean donn." I prefer, however, holding by the Grant romance as being more likely. He composed other three songs at least, besides "'S truagh a Righ! mo nighean donn." They will be found in Mr MacLean Sinclair's Gaelic bards. One is

"Cha Taobh mi na Srathan."

Cha taobh mi na srathan,
Cha bhi mi 'gan tathaich
Fhad 's a chumas fir Atholl am mòd.
Cha taobh mi, etc.

Mi aig sàil beinn Muc-Duibhe,
'S neo-shocrach mo shuidhe,
'S mi coimhead strath dubh uisge 'n eòin.
Cha taobh mi, etc.

The above is rather a good song, and consists of nineteen verses. Another is an "òran" (song).

Beir an t-soraidh so bhuam,
Do Ghleann-Ruaidh le fear eigin,
Gu buidheinn mo ghaoil,
'S iad nach saoilinn 'mhealladh orm.

Chorus.

Hugoran o u e ho,
I ri ri hiag o,
Hugan o lail o,
No ho i ri ri ho ro.

This is also a good song, and extends to twelve verses. The third is:—

"Mìle mallachd do'n òl."

(A thousand curses on the drink).

Mìle mallachd do'n òl.
'S mairg a dheanadh dheth pòit,
'Se mo mhealladh gu mòr a fhuair mi.
Mìle mallachd, etc.

Mìle marbhphaisg do'n dram
'Chuir an daorach 'am cheann,
'Nuair a ghlac iad 'san àirde-tuath mi,

also a very good song of fifteen verses, drawn from personal experience of a pretty bad bout, reminding one of the Highlander, who once had a splitting headache next morning after a spree, and remarked "Ah! whisky is a very bad thing, especially bad whisky." Poor Donald Donn, though he upheld the reputation of the MacDonald bards, had a checkered career and an unfortunate ending, which, at the present day, we can only look back upon with pity and sadness. I believe he also composed a song to the "nighean donn tha 'n Cataobh," whom he abducted from Sutherlandshire.

ALASTAIR BHOTH-FHIUNNTAIN

(ALEXANDER OF BOHUNTIN).

John Dubh, natural son of Raonall Mòr na Ceapaich, was the first MacDonald of Bohuntin) His descendants are known as Sliochd-an-taighe, and also as Sliochd-na-banfhighiche. He married a daughter of Donald Glas Mackintosh with issue five sons—Alexander, his successor, Donald, John, Ranald, and Angus. He had also a natural son, Gillecalum Mòr; Donald, John, and Ranald were put to death by the unprincipled Alastair-nan-cleas of Keppoch. Alexander, second of Bohuntin, married a daughter of MacDonald of Glencoe, by whom he had one son, Aonghus Mòr. This Aonghus Mòr, third of Bohuntin, married a daughter of Cameron of Strone, and had three sons, John, his successor, Aonghus a' Bhocain, and Alastair na Rianaich. John, fourth of Bohuntin, married a daughter of Cameron of Glenmallie, by whom he had Alexander, his successor, Domhnall Donn, and Domhnall Gruamach, all men of good poetic talents.

John Og, sixth of Bohuntin, and Domhnall Glas, his brother, were transported to North Carolina for taking part in the unfortunate rebellion in 1745.

Alexander of Bohuntin was a poet of considerable merit. Mr MacLean Sinclair gives two of his poems in his "Gaelic Bards," nearly all his other poems have perished.

Those preserved are:—

"Cumha Nam Mac."

Bho'n luighigeadh 'thug Dia dhomh,
'S mo mhath a bhi' ga iarraidh,
Gu'm faic gach duine liath mi;
'S ann tha mi trom, trom.

Cha dìrich mi ri fuar bheinn
An fhireach 's am bi 'n ruadh bhoc;
Tha m' anail goirid luath dhomh,
'S ann' tha mi trom, trom.

The other is:—

"Cumha Eile D'A Mhic."

Seachduin dòlach bho Fhéill Pàtric
Sgeula cràiteach, dh' fhalbh na bràithrean,
'Thug sguab-làrach air na càirdean,
'Bhios gu bràth 'n ar cuimhne,
Bhios gu bràth, &c.

Dh' fhalbh na h-àrmuin 'dheanadh stàth dhuinn,
'Bu mhòr tàbhachd ri uchd gàbhaidh;
Och, mo chràdh-lot 's goirt a thà mi
Dh' fhàg sid m' àirnean brùite.

The former consists of eleven verses, and the latter of seven verses. Both seem to be fairly good songs, but we lack the airs to which they were sung.

"AN CIARAN MAPACH,"

OR,

GILLEASBUIG RUADH MAC DHOMHNUILL.

Contemporaneously with "Iain Lom" was Archibald MacDonald, better known as "An Ciaran Mapach," who has hardly been done justice to by historians. I am indebted to the Rev. A. J. MacDonald, Killearnan, one of the historians of the great Clan Donald, for a correct account of this famous clansman's pedigree. He was a lawful son of Sir Donald Gorm Og, Mac-Ghilleasbuig Chléirich of Sleat, and a brother of Sir James Mòr MacDonald, who died on the 8th of December, 1678. This poet and soldier was a man of great bravery, sagacity, and prudence, and, as already mentioned, was Iain Lom's co-adjutor in punishing the murderers of the lawful heirs of Keppoch. His father placed the greatest reliance upon his fidelity in any thing requiring prudence, tact, and zeal, and allotted him a grant of land in North Uist, which was seldom given except to gentlemen of liberal education for the times. As a poet he does not seem to have been a voluminous author, few of his compositions having been preserved, which is a pity, as his taste, education, and natural powers entitle him to a high place among our Gaelic bards.

One of his songs, "B' annsa cadal air Fraoch," "'Twere better to sleep on heather," was composed when the poet-soldier was in Edinburgh under the care of a surgeon for an injured ankle. It extends to 66 lines, each verse consisting of 8 lines, and judging from the tenor of the song, the air of which is slow and plaintive, it must have been very popular. The melody is in the last edition of the "Gesto Collection of Highland Music," and has got an ancient ring about it which is very pleasing.

The plaintive nature of the song, "B'annsa cadal air Fraoch," will be seen from the following words in the 1st stanza :—

Ge socrach mo leabaidh,
B' annsa cadal air fraoch
Ann an lagan beag uaigneach
A's bad de'n luachair ri'm thaobh ;
'Nuair a dh'éirinn 's a' mhaduinn
'Bhi siubhal ghlacagan caol,
Na bhi triall thun na h-Abaid,
'G éisdeachd glagraich nan saor.

The above lines breathe home-sickness. It seems that he was a sportsman also, for in the second stanza he says—

Agus Uiginnis riabhach
An tric a dh'iarr mi an damh donn,

adding to his attainments of poet and soldier that of deer-stalker. His "Marbhrann Do Shir Seumas Mac-Dhònuill"—"Elegy on Sir James MacDonald," the poet's brother—is a much longer poem, and extends to 144 lines. In the 6th stanza there is mention of "Port Raoghuill Uidhir" "Dun Donald's tune," about which the following story is told. "Raoghull Odhar was a piper and a great coward. On one occasion, in the exercise of his calling on the field of battle with his clan, he was seized with such fear at the sight of the enemy that he left off playing and began to sing some dolorous song to a lachrymose air, some stanzas of which had been picked up and preserved by his fellow soldiers, and which, on their return from the war, they did not fail to repeat. When an adult is seen crying for some trifling cause, he is said to be singing "Port Raoghuill Uidhir." Similarly, when a Highlander is threatening vengeance against any one he will say—"Bheir mi ort gu seinn thu Port Raoghuill Uidhir,—"I will make you sing Dun Donald's tune." The following stanzas give an idea of the song :—

"B'e so an talamh mi-shealbhach !
Tha gun chladach gun gharbhlach gun chòs
Anns an rachainn da' m fhalach,
'S sluagh gun athadh a' teannadh faisg oirnn.

Fonn (Chorus).

Tha mi tinn leis an eagal,
Tha mi cointeach gur beag a bhios beò ;
Chì mi lasadh an fhùdair,
Chluinn mi sgoilteadh nan dubh-chlach ri òrd.

Fhuair mi gunna nach diùlt mi,
Fhuair mi claidheamh nach lùb ann am dhòrn,
Ach ma nì iad mo mharbhadh,
Ciod am feum a nì 'n àrmachd sin dhòmhs' ?
Tha mi tinn, etc.

Ged do gheibhinn-sa sealbh,
Air làn a' chaisteil de dh-airgead 's de dh-òr,
Oich ! ma nì iad mo mharbhadh !
Ciod am feum a nì 'n t-airgead sin dhòmhs' ?
Tha mi tinn, etc.

We should like to know a little more about this famous man, how many songs he composed, and how long he lived, etc., but I fear that little more can be ascertained about him.

GILLEASBUIG NA CEAPAICH.

(ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, KEPPOCH.)

This distinguished branch of the MacDonalds were notable for their bardic gifts. Besides Iain Lom, who was himself a cadet of the family, and his son, who inherited a considerable measure of his father's poetic talents, both Gilleasbuig (Archibald) and Coll, and several others were bards as well as chiefs. The subject of the present sketch was the 15th chief of Keppoch, and father of Silis (Cicely), the celebrated poetess. He had a large family of four (some say nine) daughters and four sons. It may here be mentioned that the chiefs of the MacDonalds of Keppoch could bring out on an emergency three hundred fighting men of their own people* as brave and gallant a band as ever trod on heather. Indeed, they were by far the most patriotic of all the Highland clans in the Stewart cause, and would have shed the last drop of their blood in the cause of their chief. The chiefs always appeared at the head of their own men, although only a branch of the great Clan Donald. They might have secured rights as they had just claims to land for signal services, but they, unfortunately, cared not for titles on parchment, they claimed their rights and titles by the edge of their sword.

Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich (Archibald) was the second son of Alasdair Buidhe of Keppoch, and succeeded his father about 1665. He married Mary, daughter of MacMartin of Letterfinlay, by whom he had four sons and four daughters—Coll, Raonall Mòr, Thìr-na Drise, Aonghas Odhar, Alasdair Odhar; Mòr, Janet, Catherine, and Cecelia (or Cicely). He died in 1682, when Iain Lom composed a splendid elegy for him. MacPherson's "An Duanaire" says that he was the grandfather of Cicely, the poetess.

Regarding Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich's claims as a poet, I find in Donald MacPherson's collection of Gaelic songs, "An Duanaire," published in 1868, several songs never printed before, amongst which are several songs and poems by the subject under consideration. This Donald MacPherson was a native of Bohuntin, in Brae Lochaber, who was long employed in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, and, of course, had access to many books and papers not accessible to ordinary collectors, or, at any rate, not very convenient for reference. It is not known how many songs Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich composed, but the following are authentic, so far as can be ascertained:—"Tearlach Stiuärt, Fear Chail-Bhinn," air fonn "Mac-talla 's an Dùn," of which the following is a stanza—

Gu'm bheil mulad orm fhéin,
Agus m' ïnntin gu léir fo sprochd!
Mu'n naidheachd so fhuair
Mi air Caoil-Bhinne chruaidh nan cnoc:
Thus', a Thèarlaich òig ùir,
'Bhi 'nad laidhe 's an ùir an nochd!
Fhir a' chridhe gun sgàth,
'Dheanadh faoilte 'n uair thàrlainn ort.

It extends to 56 lines, and was evidently an "oran mulaid," the air of which must have been sad and heavy. "Rannan-Fìrinneach" is a poem of 26 lines, not a song, so is "Rannan-Bréige" of 38 lines, the former being a true epigram, the latter a false one.

His "Oran do Domhnull-Donn, Mac-Fhir Bhoth-Fhiùnntain" (song to brown Donald, younger of Bohuntin) also consists of 8 lines in each verse. The chorus goes:—

Ho hì ri gheallaidh,
Air faire co naile!
Ho hì ri gheallaidh
Air faire co naile!
Air falbhan beag oho,
Trom othoro naile!
'Bhi 'g'ur ruith air feadh dalach,
Le geur-lanna 's e b' fheàrr leam!

This song seems more lively than the previous one, and has got some humour about it, and some satire regarding the marks of small pox upon his nose.

The "Freagairt" (reply) to Alastair Friseil's (Fraser's) song on "Iain òg MacAlasdair" consists only of 8 verses of 4 lines in each verse, but reads well, and the language is fluent, as shown in the following stanzas:—

Soraidh uam dhuit 'Alastair,
Ge mòr do phròis 's do mhearaichinn,
Clann Dòmhnuill os cionn d' analach
Ge b' oil leat e 's am bàs.

Ma is sgoilear leughaidh thu
'Tha làn de bheachd's do-léirsinneachd;
Thoir cuimhne cheart mar dh'éirich do
Bhlàr-Léine sid 'bha thall.

Iain Mùideartach mòr, iomartach,
'Mac oighre sin 'bu shine dhiubh;
A dh' aindeoin na bha 'd chinneadh ann
Gu'n robh Mac-Shimidh 'n làimh.

"Rannan Fìrinneach," a true epigram, and "Rannan Bréige," a false epigram, are also

* Keppoch had 500 men at the Battle of Falkirk in 1746.

good poems. Besides the above, "An Chailleach," "Moladh na Pìoba," and many other poems, were written by Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich.

Ni' Mhic Aonghais òig, of the Achnancoichans was a great-grand-daughter of Alasdair nan cleas, she was a poetess also. "An Ulaidh Phrìseil bha bhuainne," about the coming of Prince Charlie, is one of hers. "Angus Odhar," a brother of Silis, and son of Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, considered by some superior to his father as a poet, also composed a number of songs, one of which is in "Leabhar Raonuill Duibh," published in 1776, page 226. He left no descendants. There is also some of his songs published in MacLean Sinclair's Gaelic bards, entitled "Thugas Ceist Do Mhnaoi Ghasta," in praise of an excellent wife, consisting of eleven stanzas :—

Thugas ceist do mhnaoi ghasta
A's glan leachd, is a cùl mar an t-òr ;
Cùl cam-lùbach, barr-bhachlach,
Gruaidh dhearg dhathte, 's 'deud snaighte mar nòs ;
Sùil chorrach mar chriostal,
'S binneas theud ann am briotal a beòil ;
Aghaidh shoilleir an co-strìth,
Cobhais àillidh an neòinein no 'n ròs. &c., &c.

Evidently the song of a very good poet.

Lachlan MacPherson, Strathmashie, the famous Gaelic poet and writer, was a son of Catherine na Ceapaich, a sister of Silis, from whom he inherited his poetic genius. Numerous poems were composed by him. He was born about the year 1723. His grandfather was married to a daughter of MacDonald of Gellovie and Laggan. His father, John of Strathmashie, was a good scholar and an intelligent and sensible man. Lachlan received a good education and succeeded his father in Strathmashie sometime after 1758. He assisted James MacPherson in collecting ancient poems in 1760, and in preparing his Gaelic Ossian for the press. He was a man of strong mental powers and undoubtedly a good poet. He did not, however, attempt any great songs, those he composed were mostly humorous poems. He died in 1767. One of his songs is "Commun an Uisge-Bheatha" (the fellowship of whisky) ; another is "Cor an t-Saoghail" (the condition of the world), and a third is "A' Bhainnis Bhàn†" (the fair wedding) all very good, and exhibiting a considerable amount of ingenuity, humour, and talent. Not being a MacDonald we only claim him as a distinguished relative. I find there are other two songs that were composed by Lachlan M'Pherson, Strathmashie "Cumha do Dh'Eabhon MacPhearson, Tighearna Chluainidh," and "A bhrigis lachdunn."

'S coma leam a bhrigis lachdunn,
B'annsa 'm feile-beag 's am breacan ;
'S beag a ghabh mi riamh de thlachd
De'n fhasan a th'aig clann nan Gall.

"Crònan Nan Nighean" was composed by one of the Keppochs, but am not sure which of them ; it is entitled

"Crònan a rinn Mac-'ic Raonuill d' a thriùir nighean a bhàthadh 's iad 'g am fairigeadh fhéin air bun Ruaidh. Ris an linge sin theirear gus an là-an-diugh Linge-na-h-ighinne"—a pathetic ode by MacRanald, Keppoch, for his three daughters, who were drowned.

Fonn (Chorus). O, boban gaoil,
O, gaolach Iain,
O, boban gaoil.

'S ann 'tha 'n cadal ciùin,
Aig an triùir nighean.
O, boban, etc.

Aig Anna mo ghràidh,
'Us aig Mòir chridhe.
O, boban, etc.

'S aig an t-Seònaid duinn,
Dh' éireadh m' fhonn rithe.
O, boban, etc.

These "crònans" were generally sung when nursing, or working at and turning the quern.

There is another song entitled "Tilleadh Ealaidh ‡ Nan Nighean," "Le G. Dòmhnullach 's a' Bhràighe"—The Quick Return of the Girls, by G. MacDonald, Brae Lochaber—but whether this was Gilleaspuig na Ceapaich or not, I can't say. It seems a good song, as will be seen from the following chorus and stanza.

Fonn (Chorus).

Hó, gu'n tilleadh, gu'n tilleadh,
Na 'm faodainn,
Ealaidh nan nighean, gun dad innt'
Ach faoineachd !
'Teannadh ri fileachd gun fhios
Ciod an t-aobhar—
Gun sgil ac' air bàrdachd—sid a' cheàird a
Bhios daor dhaibh.

Ge b'e 'theann ris an ealaidh,
Bha e'n doille gun léirsinn ;
Bha droch Gàilig 'g a riabadh,
Gun ach blialam fo'n deudaich,
Chuirteadh feum air cloich-lionraith,
O nach b' fhiach an cuid géire :
'S mis' am fear a chì pàidht' i,
'Dh' aindeoin càileachd nam béist ud.

Another song, by the same author, is "Oran N'ic-Raing (Rankine) an Gleann-a-Comhann," in Glencoe.

† "An Long-Eigim," was also composed by Strathmashie.

‡ This word may mean echoing, or repeating the song of praise or joy of the girls, or replying to it.

Fonn (Chorus).

O, 'chruinneag, e 'chruinneag,
O, 'chruinneag na buaile,
O, 'chruinneag mo chridhe,
'S ann leat a ruithinn 'am fuadach.

Gur h-ann thall anns a' Chàrnaich
'An Gleann àrd nan sruth fuara,
A tha 'n rìbhinn a's bòidhche—
'Dh' fhàg fo leòn gu Là-luain mi.
O, chruinneag, etc.

Tha do thochradh 'n ad aodann,
Gur a caoin leam do shealladh.
'S a cheart aindeoin mo dhaoine,
Gu'm beil thu daonnan air m' aire.
O, chruinneag, etc.

Another Brae Lochaber bard was Allan MacDonald. He composed

"An Dronn."

"Aig bainnsean dh' fheumadh am fear air an tigeadh an dronn rann a dheanamh oirre, no bhiodh' 'An Dubh-Chapull' air. Rinneadh an rann a leanas aig bainis a bh' aig Ceann-Loch-Tréig. "An Dubh-Chapull ort, 'Ailein,' osa Raonull na Ceapaich 's e 'sìneadh na druinne dha."

A song composed by Allan MacDonald at a wedding at the head of Loch Treig, at the request of Ronald MacDonald of Keppoch. "Dronn" was the part of an animal when cut up and served, to which the tail adhered. Whoever got that part had to compose a verse or song, or "the black mare would get him"—a figurative expression of disgrace. If Allan MacDonald composed the following poem on the spur of the moment, he was certainly not devoid of poetic gifts. It is not known whether he was of the Keppoch family or not.

Chuidich mo charaid mi leis an drónn,
Gun 'bhi lóm ann am feòil,
Ach chuirteadh air a luchd-dùcha fhéin
Gu'n tug iad spéis d'i gu leòir.
'S tric a chreim iad mart-bradach,
'An déis a spadadh, ann am fròig,
'S ged a dh' itheadh iad dhith an sàth,
Bu mhath an àicheadh air mòd;
Ghabhadh iad an t-seiche gun chartadh,
Mu'm biodh iad casruisgt' a chion bhrog—
Ach a nise, cuiridh mi uam i
Gu Raonall ruadh, ogh' Aonghais òig;
'S gu Alastair Mac-Mhuirich 'an Loch-Tréig—
'S càirdean duinn fhéin na seòid.
Cha'n'eil cìobair anns na crìochan,
Do'm mathainn biatachd' am feòil,
'S cho luath 's a loisgeadh an teine 'n asgairt
Chuirinn a' ghlas-ghuib air am beòil!

MR IAIN MOR MAC-DHUGHAILL

(Big John MacDonald, son of Dugald),

The Reverend John MacDonald was a native of Lochaber, and a grandson of Alasdair Ruadh Mac-Dhùghaill of Inverlair. His mother was a daughter of MacDonald of Craineachan, people of very powerful physique. He was a priest, and was stationed in the Braes of Lochaber. He died in 1761.

He composed two songs at least; one of them was entitled—

"Ann' Eudmhor Nighean Ailein."

Verse.

Thog thu ormsa mar thuaileas
Gu'n d'thug mi fuath do'n fhìor ghloinc;
'S cha robh agad dhe d' shaothair
Ach mar shnòd caol 'chur mu ghainimh

Fonn (Chorus).

Ann' eudmhor nigh'n Ailein,
'S neo-bheusach a' bhean i;
Ann' eudmhor nigh'n Ailein,
'S i-féin 'thog an all' oirnn.

The other was—

"Marbhrann Do Dh-Anna Dhomhnullach,"

the first stanza of which is:—

'N ainnir a chunnaic mi 'm chadal
Cha robh i agam 'nuair 'dhùisg mi;
'S e bhi smuaineachadh nach beò thu
'Dh' fhàg na deòir a ruith o m' shùilean;
'S gearr an sealladh dhiot a fhuair mi;
'S truagh nach robh 'm bruadar na b'fhaide,
'S gu'm faicinn gach ni mu'n cuairt dhuit
Gun ghluasad o m' shuain gu maduinn.

The whole elegy is a very fine one, showing a great deal of genuine pity and sorrow, and fine feeling.

The Ann MacDonald referred to was a niece of the poet's, and was married to Angus MacDonald, son of Gilleasbuig Dubh of Biorichean, Aberdar. She died in child birth.§

ALASDAIR MAC AONGHUS

(Alexander, son of Angus).

Alexander MacDonald—(Alasdair Mac-Aonghus)—was a son of MacDonald of Achatriochadan, in Glencoe. He was born abont 1665, and lived at Tigh-a-Phnirt. He was 80 years of age when he joined Prince Charlie in 1745; but he never returned again to his native glen. He died at Dunblane and was buried there, where some kind person placed a tomb-stone over his grave. He was an excellent poet, but we have the same com-

§ From Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's Bards. These valuable works of Mr MacLean Sinclair have gone much too soon out of print.

plaint here as with many others in the small number of his compositions that have been preserved. He was married, and had one child at least, a daughter. It is supposed that he was a son of Aonghus Mac Alasdair Ruaidh. He was the author of "Torradh Iain Luim," John Lom's elegy already quoted. He was also the author of "Brosnachadh Do na Gaidheal 's a' Bhliadhna 1745"—an incitement to the Highlanders in the year 1745—a long poem of 118 lines, in a very earnest and semi-religious strain. I quote the first stanza to give an idea of the poem as a whole :—

A Chlanna nan Gàidheal
Dha 'm b' àbhuist 'bhi rioghail,
Ho ro togaibh an àird,
Is freasd' libh an dràsta
Do Thearlach mar dhilsean
Ho ro togaibh an àird,
Seadh freasd' libh dha uile
Gun fhuireach gun righneas,
Na leughaibh bhur cunnart,
Ar muinghin tha 'n Criosda ;
Gu stormail, acfhuinneach,
Le sunnd gu astar oirbh
Is colg gu tapadh oirbh
Ho ro togaibh an àird.

SILIS NIGHEAN MHIC RAONAILL

(CICELY MACDONALD).

Cicely or Julian MacDonald, the celebrated Keppoch poetess, was a daughter of Gilleasbuig, 15th chief of Keppoch, and flourished from the reigns of Charles II., to that of George I. She was a keen Jacobite like the rest of her family, and, of course, hated the house of Hanover most cordially. In her youth she was full of life and spirit, and composed several epigrams, some of which are very clever. She was married to a scion of the family of Lovat, and lived with him in "Moràghach Mhic Shimidh," which she describes in a poem as a place barren and desolate, in comparison with her native country of Lochaber.

The first piece she composed after her marriage was the celebrated poem beginning "A theanga sin 'sa theanga shraoil." While resident in the north, she also composed "Slàn gu bràch le ceòl na clàrsaich," as a lament for Lachlan MacKinnon, the blind harpist, who was a great favourite of hers, and who used to spend some time in her father's family. He was also in the habit of paying her visits in the north, and played on his harp while she sang. Another short piece she composed while in the north was an answer to a song by Mr MacKenzie of Gruinard. It is entitled "An obair nogha."

Her husband died while on a visit to Inverness, and she composed an elegy for him—"Marbhrann air bàs a Fir," which is a very fine production, extending to 48 lines. It begins :—

'S i so bliadhna 's faid' a chlaoidh mi,
Gu'n cheòl gu'n aighear gun fhaoilteas,
Mi mar bhàt air tràigh air sgaoileadh
Gun stiùir gun seòl, gun dràmh gun taoman.

Fonn.—O's coma leam fhin na cò dhuibh sin,
Mire no aighear, no sùgradh,
'N diugh o shìn mi r'a chunntadh,
'S e ceann na bliadhna 'thug riadh dhiom dùbailt.

Her elegy on "Alasdair Dubh Ghlinnegaraidh" is a most beautiful poem, and has served as a model for many Gaelic songs. It consists of 9 verses of 8 lines in each verse, as follows :—

Alasdair á Gleanna-Garadh,
Thug thu'n diugh gal air mo shùilean,
'S beag ioghnadh mi bhi trom creuchdach,
Gur tric g'ar reubadh as ùr sinn :
'S deacair dhomhsa bhi gun 'n osnaidh,
'S meud an dosgaidh th' air mo chàirdean ;
Gur tric an t-eug oirnn a' gearradh,
Taghadh nan darag 'is àirde.

After her husband's death she nearly died of a severe illness, and on her recovery composed several songs and hymns of uncommon pathos, some of which appeared in a hymn book published at Inverness in 1821. She lived to a good old age, but the date of her death is uncertain.*

Another lady of the Keppoch family deserving of mention is no less a personage than the sister of the murdered heirs of Keppoch. There is not much known about her, but that she composed a beautiful elegy on the death of her brothers. It is entitled "Cumha Ni' Mhic Raonuill," extending to 72 lines, wherein she gives a minute description of what she saw when she went into her brothers' room, and found their blood upon her shoes. Judging from the character of the song and the words, it must have been a very beautiful and mournful one when well sung. Those interested will find the air in "Oran na h-Alba," p. 12. Tradition says that she was sent over the river Spean to Insch on some pretext, so that she was not in the castle when the deed was actually done. It is also said she received such a shock on beholding her brothers' dead bodies that she lost her reason, a thing not at all unlikely. I quote a couple of stanzas of the elegy for the curious :—

Dh' éirich mise moch Di-dòmhnaich,
Hi rìthill iùthaill O !
'S shuidh mi air an tulaich bhòidhich—
Fàth mo liunn-duibh o-hao-o !

'S daingeann a bhuail iad ás gach taobh sibh,
'Bràithrean nan gaol, ó chòin !
Shuidh mi air an tulaich bhòidhich,
Hi rìthill iùthaill O ! etc.

A song of eighteen verses.

The swing of the song is something like some of the slow waulking songs, which were generally sung at the beginning and ending of a luadhadh (waulking).

One who could compose such a pathetic elegy was capable of a great deal more, but her early grief nipped a life of fair promise in the bud, and nothing more can be ascertained about her.

In Mr MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards," I find another version of the above song, extending to 100 lines, and differently worded. It is entitled "Cumha do dh' Alastair 's do Raonull mic Dhòmhnaill Ghlais na Ceapaich a chaidh a mhort 's a' bhliadhna 1663," the first stanza of which is as follows :—

Dh'éirich mi moch maduinn Dhòmhnuich.
I ri u ho ro !
'S chunnaic mi ' tighinn 'am chòdhail
Fàth mo leann-duibh, ho ro !

Mr Sinclair states that there were two sisters, one of whom was married to "Fear an Tulaich" (Tulloch), and that the authoress was at Tulloch the night before the murders.

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* It is known that she was living in 1724, the year in which Alasdair Dubh of Glengarry died, and said to have been a long time in a trance.

NIGHEAN MHIC AONGHUIS OIG.

(THE DAUGHTER OF YOUNG ANGUS MACDONALD.)

Angus MacDonald, of the Keppoch family, who was killed at the battle of Stron-a-Clachain in 1640, left a son who was known as Aonghas Og—young Angus. This Angus Og had a granddaughter who inherited the poetic gifts of the family. Little or nothing else is known about her except that she was a daughter of a son of Angus Og, and composed the song entitled, "Oran air Teachd Phrionns' Tearlach." As I have not much else to say about her I shall quote a stanza or two of it :—

'N ulaidh phrìseil 'bha bhuainne,
'S ann a fhuair sinn an dràsd' i ;
Gu'm b'i sud an leug bhuadhach,
'Ga ceangal suas leis na gràsan,
Ged leig Dia greis air adhart
Do'n mhuic 'bhi 'cladhach 'ad àite,
'Nis bho'n thionndaidh a' chuibhle
Théid gach traoitear fo'r sàiltean.

Slàn do'n t-saor 'rinn am bàta
A thug sàbhailt' gu tìr thu ;
Slàn do'n iùl-fhear neo-chearbach
'Thug thar fairge gun dìth thu,

Gu'm b' e sud am preas toraidh
'Thug an sonas do'n rioghachd ;
'S lìonmhor laoch 'thig fo d' chaismeachd,
'Bheir air Sasunnaich strìochdadh.

The whole poem is a pretty long one, extending to 106 lines, full of loyalty to the Stewart cause, and lavish in its praise of the MacDonald's. Such a poetess was capable of a great deal more, but even if she had composed nothing else she is worthy of remembrance on account of this one.

IAIN DUBH MAC 'IC AILEIN.*

(BLACK JOHN, SON OF ALLAN.)

John MacDonald, commonly called Iain Dubh Mac 'Ic Ailein, or John of the black locks, son of John, the son of Allan, was a gentleman of the family of Clan Ranald, and was born in 1665. He received a good education for the age in which he lived, and was a man of considerable ability, and keen powers of observation. He was descended from the Maer family, a branch of the Clan Ranalds, of whom many individuals were highly distinguished for prowess, martial spirit, and poetic powers. He held the farm of Grulean in the island of Eigg, where, we presume, he spent most of his life. Though not a poet by profession, he was considered by good judges to be not inferior to some of the best bards of his day. Should he never have composed anything but "Oran nam Fineachan Gaelach" it was enough to immortalize his name as one of our great Gaelic poets. Living in fairly affluent circumstances, and amid rural pursuits, he courted the muses only occasionally when the inspiration moved him by some occurrence to record his observations on men and manners, on which occasions he exhibited poetic powers of a high order, displaying a considerable acquaintance with the power and force of the Gaelic language as a living instrument for depicting passing events with all their poetic, stirring incidents and surroundings. Had he lived under any other circumstances there is no saying what he might have produced, but his solitary resi-

* He fought at the battle of Sheriffmuir, and besides the songs already mentioned, he composed the following—"Oran do Mhac-Mhic-Ailein," "Marbhrann do Mhac-Mhic-Ailein," "Aonghas Og Mac Sheumais," "Am Bruadar," in which he mentions Mars, the god of war, Bellova, the goddess of war, and "a mhuc iasaid," King George I., "Oran do Mhac-Shimi," Fraser of Lovat, &c.

dence on a comparatively remote island in those days, away from the most stirring events that were going on in other parts, left him little choice in the selection of subjects to show the latent spirit and fire of which he was evidently possessed. We have enough, however, in his poems which have been preserved, to warrant us in concluding that he was a great credit to the noble house of Clan Ranald. His "Marbhrann do Shir Iain Mac 'Illean Triath Dhubhart"—lament for John MacLean of Duart—is a long poem of 180 lines, each stanza consisting of 16 lines; about the longest I know, if it were intended to be sung to any air.

I consider his "Oran nam Fineachan Gaelach" (song to the Highland clans) contains as much of the fiery martial spirit as would have done credit even to the celebrated Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander, son of Mr Alexander). It is by far his best effort, and breathes a warlike spirit throughout. The air to which it is sung has also got a well-rounded measure, which suits the words admirably. In it he describes all the clans, and their respective prowess and invincible qualities in battle. The most important stanza is, of course, to the MacDonalds:—

'Nuair dh' éireas Chlann Dòmhnuill
Na leòghainn tha garg,
Na beò-bheithir mhòr-leathunn,
Chonnspunnaich, garbh,
Luchd sheasamh na còrach,
G' an òrdugh làmh-dhearg,
Mo dhoigh gu'm bu ghòrach
Dhaibh tòiseachadh oirbh!"

His "Cumha Chlann Dòmhnuill"—lament of the MacDonalds on the death of the Chief of Clan Ranald at Sheriffmuir—is a very fine poem. "Trod nam ban Eigeach"—the scolding wives of Eigg—is also very good, and some others.

MACDONALD, AM BARD MUCANACH.
(THE MUCK BARD.)

This bard, whose Christian name I have been unable to ascertain, was the family bard of Mhic-'ic-Iain MacDonald of Glencoe who lived in the island of Muck, hence styled "Am Bard Mucanach." He composed a very good poem on the massacre of Glencoe, the air of which is very old and for which I am indebted to Miss Alice MacDonell, Keppoch. It is a long poem extending to 136 lines, and was noted down by the late Mr John MacKenzie, author of the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," from the recitation of an old man in Glencoe in 1833. The cruel massacre of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, to which the lament relates, was perpetrated by a party of soldiers under the command of Captain Campbell of Glenlyon in February, 1691. Thirty-eight persons suffered in this massacre, the greater part of whom were surprised in their beds. The design was to butcher all the males under seventy that lived in the valley, the number of whom amounted to two hundred; but some of the detachments not arriving in time to secure the passes, one hundred and sixty escaped. Campbell having committed this brutal deed ordered all their houses to be burned, made a prey of all the cattle and effects that were found in the valley, and left the helpless women and children, whose fathers he had murdered, naked and forlorn, without covering, food, or shelter, in the midst of the snow that covered the face of the whole country, at a distance of six miles from any inhabited place." For a full account of this savage butchery see "Smollet's History of England." Though some of his other poems or songs have been preserved the "Mort Ghlinne Comhann"—the massacre of Glencoe—indicates that he was one of the best bards of his day.

As far as I can ascertain nothing is known of our poet's life, or when he died, but it is probable that the poem was composed in the beginning of last century, the massacre having occurred in 1691. An insular position seems to have been fatal to the preservation of particulars regarding the lives and poetic effusions of some of our Highland bards two hundred years ago. The following stanzas will give our Gaelic-speaking countrymen an idea of the excellence of the poem. There are seventeen verses of eight lines in each verse:—

Làmh Dhé leinn a shaoghail!
Tha thu carrach, mar chaochla nan sion,
An ni nach guidheamaid fhaotainn
Mar na sruthaibh ag aomadh a nìos;
'S i chneidh féin, thar gach aobhar,
Bhios gach duine ri caoine, 's e tinn,
Breth Mhic-Samhain air saoidhean,
Tigh'nn a ghleachd ruinn a thaobh cùl ar cinn.

A Rìgh! fheartaich na gréine
Tha'n cathair na féile, dean sìth,
Ri cloinn an fhir a bha ceutach,
Nach bu choltach ri féile fir chrìon;
'N uair a thogta leat bratach,
Croinn chaola, fraoch dait', agus pìob,
Bhiodh mnai ghaoil, le fuaim bhas
A' caoi laoich nan arm sgaiteach 's an strì.

Gu'n robh aigne duin' uasail
Aig a' bhail' agus uaithe a' d' chòir,
Cha b' i ghéire gun tuigse
Bha 's a' bheul 'bu neo-thuisliche glòir;
Ceann na céille 's na cuideachd
Rinn na h-eucoraich cuspair dheth t'fheòil:
Cha b' e 'm breugair' a mhurtadh
Le luchd shéideadh nam pluicean air stòl.

Some of our minor Scotch poets take a great interest in Gaelic literature and complain bitterly that we don't give them full translations from the works of our Highland bards, whom we praise so much. They say that poems in any other European language they can guess at with the assistance of Latin, German, Greek, French, etc., but Gaelic to them is a sealed book, and they cannot believe that either Iain Lom, Mairi Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, or Duncan Bàn MacIntyre, could produce anything like Byron, Scott, or Burns. The complaint is natural, and it is to be hoped that someone with a competent knowledge of the Gaelic language will come to their assistance by translating the best Gaelic poems that have not hitherto been done. There are, however, a good many translations of poems and songs if people knew where to find them. The late Rev. Thomas Pattison, of Isla, Professor Blackie, Alexander Nicolson, and others, have produced very good translations of some of our best Gaelic poems, and Messrs Henry Whyte, Lachlan MacBain, M. MacFarlane, and others have done the same for many of our songs. The late Professor Blackie studied the Gaelic language late in life, and produced very good translations of Duncan MacIntyre's best poems and some others, but, of course, as we all know, translations into such a hotch-potch language as the English, must always fall far short of the original.

RAONALL NA SGEITHE

(RANALD OF THE SHIELD).

Ranald MacDonald, or Ranald of the shield, was a son of Allan MacDonald of Achatriachadan in Glencoe. He distinguished himself as a soldier under Montrose and Dundee, and was also with the Highland army that defended Worcester against ten times their number so gallantly as to make even their enemies regret their sufferings until the king himself at length ordered them to retreat. He was killed at the horrible massacre of Glencoe on February 12th, 1691 or 1692. He left two sons, Donald and Alexander, who escaped from the massacre by having stolen away a few days previously after a servant from Glenlochy to visit their aunt who was married to Campbell of Achariach. Donald on his return found his father murdered and his home burnt down and desolate. The traditional story regarding the soubriquet of "Ronald of the Shield" is as follows:—An English dragoon who had been taken prisoner by Montrose's army, on discovering that the Highlanders had not been trained to use the sword without the target despised their swordmanship. He said in Ronald's presence that if he had not been a prisoner he would fight the best Highlander in Montrose's army with the sword alone against sword and target. "Man," exclaimed Ronald indignantly, "do you think any Highlander would take such an advantage in fighting you? I will fight you with dirk and target against your sword which puts the advantage on your side. Your being a prisoner need not deter you, for I pledge my honour, if you beat me, you will be set at liberty." "Get me a promise to that effect from the General," said the dragoon, "and our wager of battle is complete." "Montrose is a disciplinarian," said Ronald, but if you beat me, there is not a MacDonald now present, or in the royal army, who will not feel himself bound in honour to make my pledge good." The Englishman knew the clan faith and feeling and was satisfied. The instant the men stood ready for action they were intercepted by the sudden appearance of "Ailean dubh nam fiadh," the celebrated Dalness deerstalker, who hearing of the duel hastened to take the place of Ronald and fight the Englishman. Ronald refused to allow any man to take his wager of battle out of his own hands, on which Allan said to him in Gaelic: "'S fhearr an claidheamh, gu mòr na' bhiodag 's an targaid. Gabh mo chomhairle, oir cha'n'eil fios ciod a dh'éireas dhuit" (the sword is much better than the dirk and target. Take my advice, or there is no knowing what may happen to you). "Cha'n'eil," replied Ronald sternly, "fios 'dé a dh'éireas dhomhsa, ach éiridh an diabhol fhéin dhasan" (no there is no knowing what may happen to me, but the very devil will happen to him). The result of the combat is incomplete but the dragoon did not gain his liberty, and Ronald gained his traditionally celebrated soubriquet—"Raonall na Sgéithe." He composed several songs, one entitled "Latha Raon Ruari,"* is a very long one of 216 lines, of which the following stanza will give an idea:—

'S do là, a Raon Ruari
A dh'fhàg luaineach mo dhùsgadh,
Mu na thuit de Chlann Dòmhnaill
'S cha bu leòn o'n taobh cùil daibh,
'Toirt a mach an ra-treata
'Choisinn ceuta le diùbhail,
'S ged bu thèarnadh gu léir dhaibh
Bha bàs Chleibhers r' a chùnntadh.

Captain Campbell gives a free translation of the song which relates to the battle of Killiecrankie, fought on the 27th of July, 1687, and the repulse at Dunkeld on the 21st of August following.

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* The battle of Killicrankie was fought on Saturday, July 27th, 1689, and on August 21st the Highlanders attacked Dunkeld, but were repulsed with the loss of 300 men.

Raon Ruairi's day has chased away my rest,
And rules the mixed emotions of my breast,
For there, alas, my high and noble race,
Have met a loss the age will not replace,
But, ah, though all had 'scaped since Clavers fell,
Our much wronged King may bid his throne farewell.

In glory's path with faith unstrained he moved,
He spurned ambition, love of gold he proved
Beneath his thoughts, undaunted though alone,
He faced rebellion and sustained the throne,
In manhood's calmness, as in fervid youth,
One path was his—the path of loyal truth.

The carnage at this battle must have been considerable, for in the "Memoirs of Dundee" printed for James Brown at the Black Swan without Temple Bar in 1714, "the enemy did not maintain their ground two minutes after the Highlanders were amongst them, and I dare bold to say, there were scarce ever such strokes given in Europe as were given that day by the Highlanders. Many of General MacKay's officers and soldiers were cut down through the skull and neck to the very breast, others had their skulls cut off above their ears like night caps, some soldiers had both their bodies and cross-belts cut through at one blow. Pikes and small swords were cut like willow wands. Whoever doubts this, may consult many witnesses of the tragedy still living."

When Ronald of the shield heard of the execution of Charles I. he composed "Cumha Righ Tearlach a h-Aon"—lament for King Charles the first—of which the following is a stanza :—

An cualadh sibh sgeula an léiridh 's a' chràidh,
Chuir an rioghachd fo bhròn o Scuir Mhòr-bheann gu tràigh
Dh'fhalbh Prionnsa' bha saibhir an ealain 's an iùil,
'S tha' Bhan-righ a' cumhadh 's an deur 'na sùil,
'S tha, &c.

Heard ye the news of grief and pain,
That has put the country in mourning from the peaks of the mountains to the shores,
Gone is the Prince that was rich in science and various knowledge,
And the Queen is lamenting with the tear in her eye.

Little else is known of this poet-soldier who was evidently a very brave man.*

* Campbell's Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans.

DOMHNULL MACRAONUILL

(Donald, son of Ronald).

Donald MacDonald, son of Ronald of the Shield, already mentioned as having escaped the massacre of Glencoe, was the maternal grandfather of Captain Campbell, author of "The Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans." He commanded the Glencoe men in the "forty-five," whose gay wit and broad humour kept the men of the glens in continual amusement. He was the author of the famous burlesque song, "Bha claidheamh air Iain 'san t-shearmoin," occasioned by some practical joking on the part of the poet. On one occasion he called with his friend "Acha-Triachadain" on a weaver named "Iain Mac-a-Ghibidh"—John, son of the shaggy—whose vanity contrasted strangely with his shabby appearance and doubtful reputation for bravery, and asked how they happened to find him at home, when the Prince having arrived, the whole people of the glen had gone to church in the "Isle of Munn" fully dressed and armed. "How is that," replied John, suspiciously "and you absent." "Our arms and dress are hid in a cave in the hill, and we are on our way to get them," replied Donald. "Good morning, John, I thought your loyalty was more zealous and less hesitating." No sooner did they disappear than John started to dress himself in great delight having donned his kilt and arms, and marched to the little island where he broke in upon the worshippers who were both surprised and amused at his appearance. Next day the glen rung with the burlesque song of "Bha Claidheamh air Iain 'san t-shearmoin" (the sword on John at the sermon).

The song, which is very amusing, and full of humour, describes the swagger of the warrior minutely, and was as follows :—

Bha Claidheamh air Iain 's an t-searmoin,
Air Iain, air Iain,
Bha Claidheamh air Iain 's an t-searmoin,
Bha Claidheamh air Iain,
Fear deas-laimh mo chridhe,
'S tu dheanadh an fhighe neo-chearbach.

A sword was on John,
On John, on John;
A sword was on John at the sermon,
A sword was on John.
The right-handed man of my heart,
Who makes the weaving not awkwardly.

Bha Iain gun teagaibh
Gu faigheadh e freagairt
Mu'n deach e do'n eaglais 'na armaibh
Is mhosgail na mnathan le iolach 's le aighear
'Nuair dhealraich a chlaidheamh 'san t-searmoin.

John never doubted
That his offer had been accepted,
So he went to the church in arms.
How the women opened their eyes and shouted with joy
When his sword glittered at the sermon.

Great disparagement to thy person,
Was thy excess of harness ;
When thou went magnificently under arms,
Thy reeds, thy looms,
Thy shuttles, thy clews,
And thy skin-bags full of marachunn.*

Another of his humorous songs was "Brigis Mhic Ruaraidh"—Roryson's breeks. The subject was a Glencoe man who had learned the tailoring trade in Glasgow, and in his outlandish Lowland dress tried to pass himself off on an old aunt as a great foreign gentleman. The poet was not pleased with the saxonised tailor for this irreverent exhibition of his aged relative and caused his "inexpressibles" to be abstracted at night, fixed them like a banner on a hay-fork and sent them with three verses of poetry all over the country, the result of which was that hundreds of satirical verses were composed for them. The chorus is as follows :—

Oh ho, oh ho, oh he, oh he,
An d' fh'osraich, an d'-fharraid, no'n cualadh sibh,
Oh ho, oh ho, oh he, oh he,
Cò idir 'thug brigis Mhic Ruaraidh leis ?

Oh ho, oh ho, oh he, oh he,
Searched ye, asked ye, or heard ye,
Oh ho. oh ho, oh he, oh he,
For the wandering breeks of Roryson ?

His poem on the battle of Sheriffmuir is considered one of his best satirical productions—of which the following is a stanza with chorus—

Chorus.

Ho ro agus ho ! ho so an t-eagal !
Mìle mallachd 'uar déigh
Gu léir o'n theich sibh.

Fire faire Lochial !
'S clisg thair sliabh do bhratach !
'M bu chleachda dhith riamh
Sealltainn fiata 's sgapadh ?
Ob, ob, na "fir mhòra"
O shrath-lòchaidh' bhradain !

Dhoch-an-asaidh chruidh-mhìn,
Luib is ghlinn Lochaireaig !

Chorus.

Ho ro and ho ! ho ro the panic !
May a thousand curses pursue,
Since all of you have fled !

Fire faire * Lochiel !
How swiftly thy banner (clan)
Has cleared the heath !
Is it always their wont
Thus to shy and scatter ?
Ob, ob, the "big warriors †
Of Strathlochy of the salmon !
Of Doch-an-assay of milky kine
And the holms and glens of Lochaircaig !

Donald MacDonald and Duncan Bàn MacIntyre were great friends although the former was a much older man, and they fought on different sides in the "forty-five." On one occasion they had a bet which resulted in two of the best descriptive poems in the Gaelic language, the subject being their favourite forests—Coireachan Ghlinne-Comhan and Beinndorain.

It may here be mentioned that the following traditional tune is commemorative of the surprise of a party of English soldiers from the castle of Lochandorb by the MacDonalds—King Edward having in one of his Scottish raids placed a garrison in that castle, they were obliged to scour the surrounding country for supplies. One of these parties which had committed cruel excesses in a foraging expedition were overtaken when at their dinner, and their conduct having been infamous, the pursuers determined to make an example of them.

They took the ears off all the men, and the tails off all the horses, and sent them in this state to join the main army, then in full retreat. The tradition is adverted to in a MacDónald parody on the Gaelic verses of "The Campbells are Coming."

'Siad Clann Dhòmhnuill tha mi 'g àireamh—
Buidheann g'an òrdugh sròil is àrmaibh—
Buidheann dheas ullamh 'fhuair urram 'an Albain
'Dh' fhàg an trup shalach air cumachd na h-earba.

It is the MacDonalds I am commemorating,
The party to whom has been decreed banners and arms—
The ready, active party that are famed in Albyn,
Who left the infamous troops trimmed like roes (without tails).

In MacKenzies "beauties of Gaelic Poetry" Aonghus MacAlasdair Ruaidh, Angus son of Alexander Roy MacDonald is mentioned as the author of the burlesque song. "Bha Claidheamh air Iain's an t-searmoin," but there is a considerable difference between the words of the song and

* This word has no representative in English. It means the wool of sheep that died on the hill, and were left to be consumed by birds and beasts of prey.

* Mocking and scarcastic exclamations which have no equivalents in English.

† A sarcastic allusion to the clan men that "ran awa" at Sheriffmuir.

description of the weaver "shaggy John," in this work and that in Campbell's—both evidently referring to the same individual—which causes some confusion of names. MacKenzie was in Glencoe in 1833, and probably got his version from oral tradition there, but since Campbell was a grandson of the poet I have adopted his version of the story. According to MacKenzie the weaver had been at the battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715, and was among those that ran away, and to shield himself from danger he lay down beside a dyke, pulling a portion of it over him to screen him from the enemy, and on the first favourable opportunity he bolted home to Glencoe. As is usual in the Highlands several songs may have been composed to the same air, or the same individual by different persons, and sometimes the best words are lost sight of. Otherwise I can hardly reconcile the different versions of the weaver warrior and his famous song.

DOMHNALL BAN A' BHOCAIN.

Donald Bàn MacDonald of the spectre, was of the Keppoch family. For the following account of him I am indebted to Mr MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards." It was related to him in Gaelic by a Lochaber tailor named John MacDonald, who claimed the following pedigree. He was a son of Gilleasbuig MacAonghais Mac Alastair Bhàin, Mac Alastair Mhòir, Mac Aonghais a' Bhòcain, Mac Aonghais Mhòir Bhoth-Fhiunntain, Mac Alastair Mac Iain Duibh, Mac Raonaill Mhòir na Ceapaich. He had been about 30 years of age when he came to Nova Scotia. He had a good memory and had a great love for the history and traditions of the Highlanders. He knew a great deal about the MacDonalds of Keppoch's family and history. He could repeat portions of a great many Gaelic songs, and the following story was taken down from him on the 12th of January, 1885. He was then in declining health and died some months afterwards. He said that Donald Bàn a' Bhòcain lived at "Muin-Easaidh." He was of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, and had been married to a Miss MacGregor, Rannoch. He was at the battle of Culloden. After the battle he hid himself in a "bothan àiridh" a sheiling bothy. He had two guns with him; one was loaded but the other one was not. While in hiding MacDonald of Sleat's company came upon him, whereupon he jumped out of a back window, taking with him by mistake the unloaded gun. The soldiers fired at him and the bullet broke his leg; then they came up to him and demanded of him who he was. "I am a MacDonald," he replied, but nevertheless they took him with them to Inverness where he was confined in prison. He was tried by court martial but got off. When in prison he had a dream in which he saw himself, Alastair Mac Cholla, and Donald MacRaonaill Mhòir, "ag òl," over a glass of grog. It was this Donald MacRanald Mhòir, of whom it was alleged that he had two hearts. He was taken prisoner at Falkirk, and subsequently executed at Carlisle. After Donald Bàn's dream he composed the following song:—

Gur h-e mise 'tha sgìth
'S mi air leaba leam fhìn,
'S iad ag ràitinn nach bi mi beò.
Gur mise, &c.

Chunnacas Alastair Bàn
Is dà Dhòmhnall mo ghràidh
'S sinn ag òl nan deoch-slàint air bòrd.

'Nuair a dhùisg mi a m' shuain,
'Se dh' fhàg m' aigneadh fo ghruaim,
Nach robh agam 'san uair ach sgleò.

Ged a tha mi gun spréidh,
Bha mi mòr asam féin
Fhad 's a mhair sibh fhéin dhomh beò.

Faodaidh balach gun taing
'N diugh 'bhi ràidh air mo cheann:
Dh'fhalbh mo thaiceadh, mo chàil 's mo threòir.

The Bòcan, or spectre, was annoying Donald Bàn very much, and he thought that if he left his house he would have no more trouble. He did so and took everything away with him except a pair of harrows, which he left alongside the house. The people who were carrying his goods and chattels away saw the harrows coming after them. This being reported to Donald, he said "Well, if the harrows are coming after us we may as well return," so he at once returned and never left his house after. The relater's grandfather, Aonghas Mac Alastair Bhàin, who was a very truthful and honest man, was one night at Donald Bàn's house, and slept there; something caught hold of both his toes from which he could no more escape than from the vice of a blacksmith. He could not move; it was the Bòcan that had hold of him, but he did him no other harm.

Ronald of Aberarder was also one night at Donald Bàn's house, and Donald's wife said to Ronald, "Should I put the butter on the table to-night, it will get dirtied;" to which Ronald replied "I will go and put out the butter with a dirk in my hand and a bonnet over the butter-dish, and it won't be dirtied to-night." Ronald

went down with her and took away the butter but it was dirty as before.

Na clachan agus na caoban
Cha leigeadh leis an naomhan cadal.

Big John MacDougall, the priest, spent a night or two in Donald Bàn's house, but the bòcan would not come while the priest was in the house. The bòcan used to throw things at the boys and they used to hear knives being sharpened at the head of Donald Bàn's bed.

The last night the bòcan came, he told them that he had other spirits along with him, and Donald's wife remarked, "I would think that if these came with him they would speak to us." The bòcan answered, "they have no more power to speak than the sole of your foot." He also said "come out here, Donald Bàn;" "yes," replied Donald, "and thank God that you have asked me to do so." Donald was going out with his dirk, "Leave your dirk in the house, Donald Bàn," said the bòcan, "Leave your knife in also." Donald went out and he and the bòcan then went through Acha-nan-Comhachan in the middle of the night, then they went through rivers and birch woods for three miles until they came to Fheairt; when they arrived there the bòcan searched two holes where he hid some plough irons when he was alive. When he was taking them out of the hole the bòcan's eyes gave him a greater fright than anything he had ever seen or heard. When he found the irons they returned home to "Muin-Easaidh," and they separated that night at Donald Bàn's house. Then the bòcan went to a farmer's house. He stretched his arm over the farmer and began to put the clothes upon his wife. "What are you doing there?" said the irate farmer. "I am putting the clothes upon my kinswoman," said the bòcan, who immediately disappeared and was never seen again. Donald Bàn also composed a laoidh, or hymn, of 40 lines, of which the following is a stanza:—

'Dhia, a chruthaich mi gun chàileachd,
Daingnich mo chreideamh is dean làidir;
Thoir air aingeal tighinn a Pàras
Is còmhnuidh 'ghabhail ann am fhàrdaich,
Gu m' theasraiginn bho gach buaireadh
'Tha droch shluagh a' cur 'am charaibh:
'Iosa, a dh'fhuiling do cheusadh,
Caisg am beusan 's bi fhéin mar-rium!

I might have mentioned under the head of Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, that his son Angus Odhar composed a very good satirical song to a man of the name of Cameron who took a bet of a cask ot whisky with him that he could not compose a song that would offend him. The result was a song of seven verses, of which the following are stanzas:—

Gu bheil mise de Chlann Dòmhnaill,
Is tha thusa 'nad Chamshronach,
'S cha'n fhaca mi gin riamh dhe d' sheòrsa
Nach buailinn mo dhòrn air 'san leithcheann.

'N cumhne leat a Lotti ghnàda
'Nuair a bha thu thall 'am Flanras
'S tu cho salach agus sgàthach
'S nach b' urrainn thu 'n rang a sheasamh?

ALASDAIR MAC MHAIGHSTIR ALASDAIR.

(ALEXANDER SON OF MR ALEXANDER.)

Alexander MacDonald, better known as Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair, the greatest of all our Gaelic poets, was born about the year 1700. He was the second son of the Rev. Mr Alexander MacDonald, who was parish minister of Ardnamurchan before the revolution, but was deposed in 1697 for nonjurancy. He was evidently, from all accounts, an upright, honest, and conscientious man, and of great bodily strength. After his deposition he resided at Dalilea in Moidart, and continued his ministrations in Ardnamurchan and Moidart, in connection with the Episcopal Church, till his death. He had a large family of sons and daughters. The latter all died of small-pox after they had families of their own. Four of his sons lived to a good old age. Angus, the eldest, and his descendants continued tacksmen of Dalilea for a century. Alexander, as already stated, was the second son, and the two younger brothers were settled as tacksmen in Uist. Of our poet's early life-history little is known. His father intended him for the church, but the clan—Ranald of the day who countenanced young men of ability, preferred that he should be educated for the bar, and he was accordingly sent to the University of Glasgow, of which his father was a graduate, for some sessions. How long he remained at the University is not known, but some of his poems indicate an acquaintance with the ancient classics. The upshot of his University career was that he followed his own inclinations, and disappointed both his father and his chief. When attending college it is certain that he did not neglect his studies altogether, as he was a good classical scholar. His genius and powers were great, and his energy of mind equal to any task he took in hand, but, like many geniuses, he was rather imprudent. He married early in life Jane MacDonald of the family of "Dail-an-Eas," in

Glenetive. This rash step which interfered with his University career, compelled him to look out for some employment, and shortly after, we find him in his native parish teaching in one of the schools supported by the society for propagating Christian knowledge, from which he was afterwards promoted to the parish school of Ardnamurchan,* where he was an elder in the church, consequently, he must have been at that time a Presbyterian, or member of the Church of Scotland, otherwise he could not have held the office of teacher in a parish school. At this time he lived on the farm of Coirivullin, at the base of Ben-Shiante, the highest mountain in that part of the country, and near the ruins of the famous castle of Mingarry, a romantic situation on the Sound of Mull, opposite Tobermory, where he had ample scope for courting the muses. His reputation as a scholar must have been early established, as the Presbytery of Mull recommended him to the society for the propagation of Christian knowledge, as a competent person to undertake the compilation of a Gaelic vocabulary for the use of their schools. This work he undertook, and successfully executed in 1741, which was the first of its kind ever published. In 1745 when the Highland chiefs rose to support the cause of Prince Charles Edward Stewart—the "Bonnie Prince Charlie" of the Jacobites—our poet joined the Highland army under the younger Clan Ranald, and received a commission, but whether he accompanied the Prince's army and fought in any of the battles is not known, but the probability is that he did, as he was a man of a very different calibre to Iain Lom; he could both sing and fight. He was considered a valuable adherent to the Stewart cause, both as an officer and a poet, in which latter capacity he raised the enthusiasm of the Highlanders to the highest pitch. He shared the disasters of that campaign, and "lost his all," and after the defeat of the Prince's army at Culloden, he, like several others, was obliged to conceal himself in the wood and caves of "Ceannloch-nan-uamh," above Borrodale, in the district of Arisaig, where he was exposed to great hardships. On one occasion when lurking about with his brother Angus, the cold was so intense that the side of MacDonald's head which rested on the ground became quite grey in a single night. After the act of indemnity was passed he received from Clan Ranald the appointment of baillie, or land steward, of the island of Canna, but how long he remained there is uncertain. He had been invited to Edinburgh by some Jacobite friends there to take charge of the education of their children, and it is supposed that he was in Edinburgh in 1751, the year in which his first volume of original Gaelic poetry, the first ever published, took place. The work was entitled "Ais-eiridh na Sean chanoin Albannaich." A second edition appeared in 1764 in Glasgow, and it was several times re-published there, in 1802, in 1835, in 1839, in 1851, and in Edinburgh in 1872, but the latter not as originally published. It is supposed, however, that one-tenth of his poems and songs have never been given to the world, his MS. having been torn up and lost in the house of one of his sons, except a few that were published by his son Ronald, with some poems of his own in 1766. His mission to Edinburgh having proved unsuccessful he returned to the Highlands and settled at "Eignaig" in Moidart. While there he and the local priest lived on very bad terms, probably on account of some of his songs, and he removed to Knoydart where he resided at Inveraoi. According to MacKenzie in his "beauties of Gaelic poetry," our poet composed a number of songs after this—one of them entitled "Iomraich Alasdair a Eignaig do dh' Inner-aoidh," in which he displays a considerable amount of irritability and discontent at the treatment he received while at Eignaig. He represents all things animate and inanimate, rocks and thorns, thistles and wasps, ghosts and hobgoblins, combining to torment him. Inveraoi he describes as a place like Paradise, full of all good things, blooming with roses and lilies, and flowing with milk and honey, free of ghosts and hobgoblins, and venomous reptiles. How long he remained in this rocky Paradise is not known, but he appears to have lived some time in Morar, as he composed a very fine song in praise of that country. The writer was told many years ago by an Arisaig man that his "Fàilte na Mòrthir," "Fàilt' ort fhéin a Mhòrthir bhòidheach Anns an òg mhios Bhealltain" was composed on his arrival on the mainland from Canna, but MacKenzie, who is one of our best known authorities, does not mention this. According to Reid, MacDonald, when a young man, was ground agent under the factor of Canna, and Thomas Pattison remarks that Alexander MacDonald was so long in the island of Canna that he seems to have come to regard the mainland of Argyll at one time with the eyes and feelings of an Hebridean; as his poem "Hail to the mainland" (or Mòr'ir) shows. Many have been under the impression—the writer amongst them—that "Diomoladh na Mòrthir"—dispraise of Morar—was composed by Alexander MacDonald, but it seems that this was not the case. In the Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's "MacLean Bards" published last year, I find it was composed by his keen rival John MacLean—"Iain Mac Dhòmhnuill"—a herdsman in Mull, of which the following stanzas only have been preserved:—

* Mr MacLean Sinclair says there was no parish school at Ardnamurchan in his day.

'S mairg a mhol a' Mhòrthir robach
Air son stobaich challtuinn,

Heitirinn àirinn uirinn ohoro,
Heitirinn àirinn hò rò.

Fearann mosach 's olc r'a choiseachd
Cha chinn molt no meann air.

Mnathan binneach air bheag grinneas,
'S iad ri inisg chainnteach.

It is said in disparagement of our poet that he changed his religion several times, that he was bred an Episcopalian, afterwards joined the Church of Scotland, and finally became a Roman Catholic. It is not surprising that a man of such conspicuous ability should have been marked out for criticism by weak-kneed, clean shaven philistines, goody-goodies in various stages of hypocrisy, who went out of their way to collect any scandal that could be found out about him, regardless of all Christian charity, even to the coarseness and clumsiness of his appearance, the shabbiness of his coat, &c. Reid in his *Bibliotheca Scoto-Celtica* is his first traducer, and most other writers follow in his wake. Since Reid has given no authority for his statements, we are quite justified in rejecting them. Yet the same Mr Reid says of his sea piece, composed to the bìrlinn, or pleasure boat, of Clan Ranald, that "for subject matter, language, harmony and strength, it is almost unequalled in any language." Both Mr Reid and his informants were probably unaware that genius often scorns personal adornment, and if these tattlers expected to find our poet in his "best Sunday clothes" expecting distinguished visitors, it is no wonder that they should have been disappointed. Another of Reid's stories is that he used to "lie upon his back in bed in winter, or on the grass in summer, with a large stone on his breast, muttering to himself in a low whisper his poetical aspirations." Lying on one's back is a great calmative to deep thinking, but what benefit could be derived from a large stone resting on one's chest is not so clear. The above story probably originated from the fact that the poem to Clanranald's bìrlinn was suggested to the poet one day on taking shelter under an upturned old boat from a heavy shower of hail. While lying down in his cramped position he noticed a centipede struggling on its back in a small pool of water, having fallen from the roof of the boat, the play of its numerous legs resembling the oars of a boat. Scandal-mongers like Mr Reid, and his coadjutors, forgot to record another story which is favourable to the poet's wit and humour. On one occasion at a meeting of Presbytery at which his father was present, the poet made his appearance among the assembled divines, one of whom asked him in Gaelic, "C'àit an robh thu Alasdair?" "Bha Alasdair ann an Ifrionn," fhreagair 'athair, "Cò chunnaic thu an sud?" "Cha'n fhaca mi ni ach na chì mi an so; cha'n fhaighinn 'an còir an teine le ministearan!" "Where were you Alister?" "Alister was in Hell," replied his father (meaning that he was not in the best of company) "What did you see there, asked a facetious gentleman of the long robe. "I saw nothing but what I see here; I could not get near the fire for ministers!" Like many other poets Alexander MacDonald was in poor circumstances, and had many trials and numerous enemies, yet he managed to live to a good old age, and ultimately died at Sandaig, in Arisaig, and was gathered to his fathers in Eilean Fhionain in Loch Sheil. Our poet has always held a foremost place among our Highland bards. He was a genius of the highest rank. Every line he has written is full of energy and strength, especially in his martial songs. He is a vehement, rapid, and exciting singer, and no one has ever approached him in his great command of the Gaelic language. Pattison says of him that he is the most warlike, and by far the fiercest of the Highland poets, yet in his pastoral pieces descriptive of nature, he is full of tenderness, sweetness, and grace. If his most vigorous passages may be called fierce, the time in which he lived, and the cause he adopted will account for it. Many feel just as impetuous, but they lack the language to express their impetuosity.

His "Bìrlinn Chlann-Raonuill"—Clan Ronald's pleasure-boat or skiff—the longest poem in the Gaelic language, except such as are Ossianic, is considered his finest effort. No one could have produced it except a man of strong nerve and daring courage, who delighted to be in the thick of danger wherever he could meet with it by land or sea.

It opens with a blessing on the ship and armour of Clan Ronald. He pleads for favourable gales and for the safety of the hardy sailors and the ship, and for guidance to the desired haven. The dedication of Clan Ronald's armour mentions swords, lances, heavy mail, hand arms, plaited shields, shoulder belts, unfailing birch-arrows, bayonets, daggers, and hilts. The men are exhorted to be brave, so long as a plank of the skiff remains, or an inch of it above the water. The rowing song is full of power and animation. The oars are described and their effect. "They buffet the seas that rise into the sky. The phosphorescent light gleams. The haughty waves must bend their heads, and over the hilly billows speeds the skiff. Strong shoulders work their way through the mountains of the main, and as if in sympathy the creaking boards respond. The skiff is strained in every plank; but forced onward by the might of unwearied arms and skilful oaring it ploughs it's way regardless of danger." Then we come

to the oarsmen's "Iorram" which the writer considers the greatest and best rowing song ever composed, except the "Dubh Ghleannach" by Alex. MacKinnon, which has no equal in any language. It is explained that this song is called for by Malcolm, son of Ronald of the seas, after the 16 men have taken their place at the oars. "The substance of what Malcolm sings is as follows :—"As you have been selected let your forward movement prove not unworthy. Let the barque brave the blast and dare its full force. Let your cheeks be ablaze, your hands part with their skin, and your sweat fall in drops on the boards. Bend and pull, and make the grey fir win against the sea-streams. Together strong and bold, split the dread and roaring waves, strike straight and each on one another to awaken courage in your veins. Let her oar-prow disperse the swollen billows, and her sides smash all obstacles. Let the sea overflow her, but let your mighty arms overmatch and at last raise the sails to catch a fair wind from Uist." Having at length got into the open sea, and having a fair wind the oars are taken in, and the sails quickly set and the Mac-Donalds, as choice sailors, who fear no storm or danger of any kind, are put in charge.

"All the men having received and obeyed orders, the helmsman is called to his post and addressed as follows :—Let there be at the helm, a stout and brave man that billows cannot move, a courageous, and powerful fellow, a cautious, patient, and cool sailor that deviates not by an inch from the due course, that remains unmoved when the sea heaves over his head, and that guides the vessel in the stormiest hour to the desired haven."

To any one accustomed to boating in rough and stormy weather, the descriptions given in the poem of the "Bìrlinn" seem absolutely perfect. The next goes on to describe the position of "Fear-Beairte," or the man to attend to the rigging. He must be constantly on the alert, must see to the spars, tackle, &c., or let loose as the case may demand. He must know the directions of the wind, and according to the sailing course, constantly tighten or loosen the ship's gear.

The "Fear-sgòid," or sheet man, must have a strong, stout, and bony arm, and sturdy fingers to pull in or relax as the case may require. The "Fear-cluaise," or look-out man, must watch with careful eye whether progress is made or not, and if he finds that the wind is rising or veering round, he must shift the "lug" accordingly. He must go in front where he can see clearly, and be a tower of strength, and source of information. He must look to the four points, and tell the steersman how to act by carefully noticing the land-marks.

Another man, "Fear Calpa-na-Tàirne," is put in charge of the halyards of the ship. He must be accurate, punctual, and fail not for a moment else the ship may suddenly become a wreck upon the rocks. Besides, there is a man appointed to watch the waters, and stand beside the steersman and inform him whether wind and wave strike fore or aft, one to pump out or empty the ship with a wooden pail, who must not quit his post or faint at the roar of the ocean.

As the storm increases two other men are sent to take down some of the sails, men of stature and strength. Six men are kept in reserve in case any of the preceding should fail, or fall overboard, and these are to go from one end of the ship to the other, and from side to side to see that all is right. Would that most captains at the present day were as cautious as our poet.

After all had been arranged and every one knew, and was expected to do his duty—Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar was probably borrowed from our poet !—the start was made on St. Bridget's day from Loch Ainneart in South Uist. The sun rose in golden hues, but soon the heavens gathered darkness and gloom, the sea became dark-green, billowy, boisterous, and the sky contained every hue found in tartan plaid. The storm came on from the west, clouds were careering, torn by the wind. The speckled sails were raised aloft, the ropes were strained—all was tightly bound and fastened by iron hooks. Each man was in his place. Then opened the windows of the sky. The dark-grey ocean assumed its rough, dark and awful mantle, and suddenly it swelled into shaggy mountains and deepened into dreary glens. The blue deep opened wide its cavernous mouths, and there was a deadly conflict in the yawning whirlpool. Phosphorescent light illumined each mountain billow and the white crested waves wildly roared. Long before the waves came near their vehement heaving was heard. When under the ridge of the high billows the good ship was all but doomed in a seething, churning, upheaving, ocean caldron. In this plight, when lightning gleamed, thunders rolled, and the storm grew more terrific in the blackness of darkness, with the elements above and below at war, still we despaired not, and because we did not yield, the sea pitied our state, and made peace with us ; but not before every mast had been bent, every sail torn, every plank and spar strained, every oar shattered, every fastening loosened, our helm twisted, every spike cracked, and cordage snapped, every nail displaced. In the Sound of Islay the rough and furious winds journeyed to the upper regions of the air, and the sea became as smooth as a level plain. Then we gave thanks to the Almighty who preserved Clan Ronald from death, we reached the safe harbour of Carrick Fergus, threw out anchor slowly, refreshed ourselves, and rested."

The late Thomas Pattison of Isla translated the whole poem of the "Bìrlinn," and the late Professor Blackie and Sheriff Nicolson also translated part of it. Those who are unacquainted with the poem can form an opinion from the following quotation which I take from Pattison's rendering of it :—

May God bless the ship of Clan Ranald,
This first day it floats on the brine,
Himself, and the strong men who guide it,
Whose virtues surpassing shine!
May the Holy Trinity temper
The stormy breath of the sky,
And sweep smooth the rough swelling waters,
That our port we may draw nigh.

Father! creator of ocean
And each wind that blows from on high!
Bless our slender bark and our heroes,
Make all ill things pass them by,
O Son! bless then our anchor,
Our tackling, helm, and sail;
Every thing on our mast that is hanging,
Till our haven at last we hail.

THE BLESSING OF THE ARMS OF CLAN RONALD.

May God bless all our weapons,
Our blades of Spain, sharp and grey,
And our massy mails which are able
The keenest edge to stay;
Our swords of steel and our corslets,
And our curled and shapely targets,
Bless them all without exception,
The arms our shoulder-belts carry;

Our bows of yew, well made and handsome,
Bent oft-times in the breast of battle;
Our birchen shafts not prove to splinter,
Cased in the sullen badger's hide;
Bless our poignards and our pistols,
And our tartans fine and folded,
And every implement of warfare
In MacDonald's bark this hour.

THE INCITEMENT TO ROW TO A SAILING PLACE.

To bring the barge so dark and stately,
Whence we'd sail away,
Thrust out those tough clubs and unyielding
Polished bare and grey,
Those oars well made, smooth-waisted,
Firm and light,
That row steadily and boldly
From smooth palm to foam white.

That send the sea in splashing showers
Aloft unto the sky,
And light the brine-fire bright and flashing
As when the coal-sparks fly,
With purpose-like blows of the great heavy
With a powerful sweep [weapons
Wound the huge swell on the ocean meadows
Rolling and deep.

Ye lusty, heavy, stalwart youngsters!
Stretch your full length;
With shoulders knotty, nervy, hairy,
Hard with strength;
See you raise and drop together
With one motion
Your grey and heavy shafts, well-ordered,
Sweeping ocean.

Thou stout surge-wrangler on the foremost oar,
Shout loudly "Suas oirre" (up with her),
The song that wakes the arm's best vigour
In each cruiser.
And hurls the "Bìrlinn" through the cold glens
Loudly snoring,
Or, climbing, clearing the swollen surges,
Hoarsely roaring.

When hill-waves thus are flung behind
By your stout shoulders;
"Hugan" will the ocean wailing shouting say,
And "Heig" groan the oar-holders.
From the strong surge a thud—a dash of spray,
Goes o'er each timber,
But still oars creak, though blisters rise on
Strong and limber. [fingers

Then after the sixteen men are seated at the oars in order to row under the wind to the sailing place, let stout Callum, son of Ronald of the ocean, shout the "Iorram," or boat song (pronounced Yirram), for her, and be seated on the foremost oar, and let this be it :—

Now, since you are ranked in order,
And seem all to be well chosen,
Give her one good plunge like champions,
Brave and boldly,
Give her one good plunge, &c.

Give her not a plunge imperfect,
But with right good will and careful,
Keep a watch on all the storm hills
Of the ocean,
Keep a watch, &c.

With a mighty grasp and manful
Stretch your bones and stretch your sinews,
Leave her track in light behind you
Stepping proudly,
Leave her track, &c.

Raise the foam-bells round the thole-pins,
Till your hands are sore and blistered,
And the oars themselves are twisted
In the strong waves,
And the arms themselves, &c.

Let your beams be hotly lighted;
Heed not, should your palms get skinless,
And the huge drops from your forehead
Fast be falling,
And the huge drops, &c.

and it ends with the following stanza :—

Sweep around you, point before,
Till your beams are streaming moisture;
Thence, with full-spread sail, leave Uist
Of the solans,
Thence, with full-spread sail, &c.

These stanzas will give an idea of the poem as a whole, bearing in mind always that any translation falls far short of the original.

The first song composed by our poet was "Cuachag an Fhàsaich"—Cuckoo of the sheiling—to a dairymaid of whom he was enamoured. It is full of tenderness of expression, just what a love song should be. His "Moladh Mòraig" is also full of beauty and tenderness, and is considered one of the finest productions of the Celtic muse. It is in the form of a pibroch and extends to 318 lines. The following extract from Pattison's translation will give an idea of the style of the poem :—

A face I never saw
Since my dawning days,
Not one so free of flow,
Full of glorious grace ;
Though Mally still was mild,
And her cheeks like rowans wild
As fickle as the wind she smiled,
When it drones and stays.
Peggy had a slight
Trace of age's blight,
Marsaly was light
Full of saucy ways,
Lilly's love was bright
Though a speck had dimmed her sight,
But they were all as tame and trite
As washing suds to Mòrag

All MacDonald's biographers are agreed that such a beautiful song as the above should have been left undisturbed, and he is much blamed for having produced his dispraise of Mòrag, to appease his wife's jealousy. It certainly leaves him open to censure, and was ungallant, to say the least of it, even should the dispraise have been repugnant to his own feelings.

As regards the "Aigeannach," from all accounts she deserved, in a manner, the retaliation which he poured out and heaped upon her mortal frame. He might well say, as one of the writer's Dominies once remarked,—"I am a terrible flogger when I flog !" However, it is not our part to pass sentence on the dead ; what we want to know is, what was good in the man. It is said that he lived to regret any pain he may have given anyone by his declamatory utterances and very robust literature, and that we must accept.

Another of his greatest compositions is "Allt-an t-Siùcair," "the sugar brook," a small, ignoble stream between his farm and the one next it. As a descriptive poem it has hardly an equal in the language. "It is an animated description, in glowing words, of a beautiful scene in the country on a lovely summer morning. The dew is seen glittering on every leaf and flower. Richard and Red Robin sing cheerily, and the cuckoo tells her tale. The mavis, the blackbird, and the blackcock with his mate all warble pleasantly. The fish are leaping out of the water and catching the fast moving flies. The honey-sucking, speckled bee flits from flower to flower, and seeks no other food than the fragrance of the rose. The clear and crystal rivulets rejoice, and the cascades of "Allt-an t-Siùcair" murmur pleasing sounds. Its banks are made beautiful by water-cresses and green herbs, gold-decked thistles, red and yellow bees collect their stores. As music to the ear is the lowing of the cows with the responsive calves. The dairymaid fills her sounding pail, and the herd is near at hand. The ground is bespangled with flowers of richer hues than the most costly gems, and the primroses look like candles set to illuminate the whole. Nature has, with rare care, adorned its banks with daisies and other flowers that resemble the expanse of brilliancy seen in the sky on a frosty and clear night," etc. Good judges say there is not a poem in English or Gaelic to be compared with this one.

His "Oran an t-Samhraidh," an "Ode to Summer," is also a delightful poem, concerning pastoral beauty. He composed it at Glencribisdale, on the south side of Loch Suinart, in the parish of Morven. His "Ode to Winter" is longer, and displays even greater powers of genius, but it is not so popular owing to its containing so many "recondite terms" and allusions. It was composed in Ardnamurchan. After leaving that locality a subject presented itself, which roused all his energy and enthusiasm. His soul was fired with the cause of the Stewarts, and all his powers, mental and bodily, were roused to action. His Jacobite poems and songs surpass all others. "The Lion's Eulogy" is full of that fierceness which Pattison speaks of ; so are several of the Jacobite songs. His "Oran nam Fineachan Gaelach," song to the Highland Clans, to the air of "Wauking o' the Fauld," "Am Breacan uallach"—the gay plaid ; "O Hi Ri Ri tha e tighinn," "O he (the Prince) is coming," and the ever popular "Agus Ho Mhòrag," where Prince Charlie is represented as "Mòrag," a young girl with flowing locks of yellow hair waving over her shoulders. She had gone away over the seas, and the bard invokes her to return with a party of maidens (*i.e.* soldiers) to dress the red cloth, or in other words, to beat the English red coats. The allegory is kept up with great spirit to the end, and the poet introduces himself as one who had followed "Mòrag" in lands known and unknown, and was still ready to follow her over the whole world if necessary. It speaks volumes for the loyalty of the Highlanders to the Stewart cause. When, having lost all they possessed in the world, they were still willing to rejoin the Prince.

His "Smeorach Chlainn-Raonuill," — Clan Ronald's mavis—is a splendid song of 34 verses ;

so is "Tearlach Mac Sheumais" (Charles, son of James), with 22 lines in each verse, a song between the Highlanders and Prince Charlie in which the Prince praises the MacDonalds above all others. "Moladh an Chaim-Beuloch Dhuibh," and several others. Of his thirty-nine pieces which we possess, there is not a single second-class song or poem amongst them. That Alexander MacDonald was a great genius there can be no doubt, and as a poet he stands second to none that Great Britain has produced. In poetic fire, force, eloquence of expression, and command of langnage, he has no equal, and certainly in descriptive power no one has ever surpassed him. Indeed, it may be said of him as of Shakespeare, Byron, Burns, and Scott,—"We shall never see the like of him again."

It is related that on the night on which he died, two young men were sitting up with him. Finding the time long they began to compose a song. The poet made some remark about their want of success and helped to make a few verses for them. He had scarcely finished the last verse when he fell back upon his pillow and expired; the date of which has not been recorded.

IAIN MAC DUGHAILL 'IC LACHLAIN

(JOHN SON OF DUGALD SON OF LACHLAN.)

This excellent poet, whose compositions have also mostly been lost, was a native of Benbecula in North Uist, or rather an island between North and South Uist, containing a population of about 1660 souls. He flourished in the time of James Frances Edward, son of James II., King of Great Britain and Ireland, commonly called "The Pretender."

He composed his ever popular song, "Tha tighinn fodham éiridh," in praise of Allan, the gallant captain of Clan Ronald, shortly before the rising of 1715. The hero of the song was a man of great culture, as well as military courage, and his fall at the battle of Sheriffmuir was deeply lamented throughout the Highlands. The desire rooted in the Highland breast to rise for the restoration of the Stewart dynasty is well expressed in the chorus and song, which I here give in extenso, as it is one of the best Gaelic songs that can be sung on convivial occasions, especially when Jacobites are present:—

ORAN DO THIGHEARNA CHLANN-RAONAILL.

SEISD:—Tha tigh'nn fodham, fodham, fodham,
CHORUS Tha tigh'nn fodham, fodham, fodham,
Tha tigh'nn fodham, fodham, fodham,
Tha tigh'nn fodham éiridh.

Sud an t-slàinte chùramach,
Olamaid gu sùnntach i,
Deoch-slàint' an Ailein Mhùideartaich,
Mo dhùrachd dhuit gu'n éirich.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

Ged a bhiodh tu fada bhuainn,
Dh' eireadh sunnd 'us aigne orm;
'N uair chluinninn sgeul a b' aite leam,
Air gaisgeach nan gniomh euchdach.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

'S iomadh maighdean bharrasach,
Dha maith a thig an earasaid,
Eadar Baile Mhanaich,
'S Caolas Bharraidh a tha 'n déigh orr.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

Tha pàirt an Eilean Bheagram dhiubh,
Tha cuid 's an Fhraing 's an Eadailt dhiubh,
'S cha 'n 'eil latha teagaisg
Nach bi 'n Cille Pheadair treud dhiubh.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c,

'N uair chrunnicheas am bannal ud,
Bréid caol' an càradh crannaig orr'
Bi'dh fallus air am malaidhean,
A' danns' air ùrlar déile.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

N' uair chiaradh air an fheasgar
Gu 'm beadarach do fhleasgaichean:
Bhiodh pìoban mòr 'g an spreigeadh ann,
'Us feadanan 'g an gleusadh.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

Sgiobair ri là gaillinn thu,
A sheòladh cuan nam marannan,
A bheireadh long gu calachan,
Le spionadh glac do threun fhear.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

Sgeul beag eile dhearbhadh leat,
Gur sgealgair sithne 'n garbhlaich thu,
Le d' chuilbheir caol nach dearmadach,
Air dearg-ghreidh nan ceann eutrom.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

B'e sud an leòghann aigeannach,
'N uair nochdadh tu do bhaidealan,
Làmh dhearg 'us long 'us bradanan,
'N uair lasadh meamna t' eudainn.
Tha tigh'nn fodham, &c.

Note—The above is from "The Uist Collection" of poems and songs by the Rev. Archd. MacDonald, Kiltarlity.

James Boswell, the distinguished biographer of Dr. Johnson boasted that he could sing a verse of it, and he relates that when Clan Ronald's servant was found watching the body of his

master the day after the battle of Sheriffmuir, someone asked who that was? The servant replied, "he was a man yesterday."*

None of our poet's other compositions have been preserved, as far as I am aware, which is a great pity, as it is hardly credible that this excellent martial song could have been the only one which he produced. Other particulars regarding his life and death are also wanting.

TRANSLATION OF

"THA TIGHINN FODHAM EIRIDH."

BY JAMES BOSWELL.

Come, pledge the health we proudly name,
The health of hero bright—
Allan of Moidart, to thy fame,
And may'st thou rise in might!
Tha tighinn, &c.

Though far from me thou might'st remove,
My heart would glow to hear
The martial tidings that I love,
The deeds of heroes dear!

Oh, many a maiden in her mirth—
In costly habit† fine,
From Manich town to Barra firth,
Would joy that she were thine.

And some of England's daughters free,
And some in flowery France,
And some in sunny Italy
May rue thy witching glance.

Even to Kilphedar's‡ holy fane
Crowd all the damsels fair,
Nor seem to list the preacher's strain,
For Allan Moidart's there.

Or gathering at the trysting ground,
When falls the evening grey,
To pipe and flute the dancers bound
With coifs§ and streamers gay.

A pilot wise in storms art thou,
To sail by gulf or strand,
With dauntless skill to point the prow
And steer the bark to land.

A hunter brave, thy quarry still
On mountain rough to find,
When breaks the main on pass and hill,
And starts the stag and hind.

A lion fierce in battle thou,
Thy blood-red crest‖ on high;
Grim valour sits upon thy brow,
And glory lights thine eye!
Tha tighinn, &c.

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* Boswell's Journey, p. 358.

† Habit, a loose dress used by ladies in the West Highlands in 1715, a fashionable walking dress.

‡ Cille Phedair, the chapel or burying-grou d dedicated to St. Peter.

§ The young women wore fillets of white cambric round the head, which were fastened behind, crossed like a clergyman's band.

‖ A red hand, a ship, and a salmon were the armorial bearings of the Captain of Clan Ranald.

"AN AIGEANNACH."

(MAIRI NIGHEAN IAIN MHIC IAIN.)

This strong-minded clanswoman, styled "Nighean Dhonuill Ghuirm" in Gillies's collection, and supposed by some to have belonged to the MacDonald's of Sleat, in Skye, and a daughter of Donald Gorm, brother of the Lord MacDonald of the day. Others, on the other hand, hold that she was a native of Moidart, and a descendant of the clan Ronald family. Judging from what the writer was told by an Arisaig man many years ago, he is inclined to believe that she lived at and belonged to the Moidart district. In fact, he understood that she lived not very far from the residence of the famous poet Alexander MacDonald. At any rate, she and Alisdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, who frequently met her, were at daggers drawn; for in the first edition of his songs, published in 1751, there is one headed "Marbhrann Mairi Nigheann Ian Mhic Iain, do'n goirteadh An Aigeannach." From this heading some have tried to prove that she was a native of Moidart, and those opposed to this view base their claim as already stated on Gillies's collection where she is styled as "Nighean Dhonuill Ghuirm." Whoever she was, she was a terror in her own day, and I don't suppose that either branch of the great Clan Donald would be very anxious to receive her with open arms. Her songs were principally satires or lampoons. That she was a woman of great talent there can be no doubt, but she was a very different person from our famous Skye poetess, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh," who sang so sweetly, so faithfully, and so pathetically for her kindred, the famous Mac-Leods of Dunvegan and Bernera, etc. One of the "Aigeannach's" songs, entitled, "Oran do Lachunn òg Mac Ionmhuinn"—song for young Lachlan MacKinnon—(looks as if she had some connection with Skye), appears in Sinclair's "Oranaiche," and another of very high poetic merit is printed in "The Gaelic Bards" by the Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair. The numerous stories that are afloat regarding her encounters with the King of the Jacobite Bards, I have no doubt have been very much exaggerated. Here are a few stanzas of her song to young Lachlan MacKinnon, from Archibald Sinclair's "Oranaiche," entitled "Oran do Lachlann Og Mac-Ionmhuinn, Leis An 'Aigeannaich,' Nighean Dhònuill Ghuirm."—

Gu'n tug mi 'n ionnsuidh bhearraideach,
Mur do mheall thu m' aithne mi,
Cha b' e d' fhuath 'thug thairis mi
Ach d' aithris air bhi falbh.
Cha b' e d' fhuath, etc.

Ma chaidh thu nunn thar linntichean,
O, gu'm a slàn a chì mi thu,
'Fhir 'chùil dualaich shnìomhainich,
'S ann leat bu mhiann 'bhi mòr.
'Fhir 'chùil, etc.

Bu mhiann leat bàta dìonach 's i
Gu cumta, fuaighte, fìnealta,
A rachadh suas 's nach dìbreadh i,
'S a chìosnaicheadh muir mhòr.
A rachadh, etc.

Le d' sgioba treubhach, furachail,
Bu ro-mhaith feum 's na ruinigil,*
A ghléidheadh air bhàrr tuinne i
'Cheart aindeoin cur is ceò.
A ghléidheadh, etc.

There are other twelve verses of this song. any one capable of producing it must have been gifted with poetic talent of a high order, whether applied rightly or wrongly. There is little else known about her at the present day; whether she was successful or unsuccessful in life, where she lived, or where she died; but charity bids us draw a veil over the life of one who seemingly had many enemies.

Note.—The Rev. Mr MacLean Sinclair gives the following reason as strong proof that the "Aigeannach" belonged to the Clan Ronald branch of the MacDonalds. In Alexander MacDonald's (Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair) poems published in 1751, there is a poem entitled "Marbhrann Màiri nighean Iain Mhic Iain do'n goirteadh An Aigeannach," in which the following lines occur :—

"'N àm 'bhi cur na h-ùir' ort,
Sheanachaisinn mo rùn-sa,
'Mach a teaghlach Mhùideart
Culaidh 'rùsgadh phiostal."

Alexander MacDonald must have known to which family she belonged, and the above seems conclusive that she belonged to the Clan Ronald branch of the clan." Her "Oran Do Bhean Chladh-na-Macraidh" is even better than the one to young MacKinnon. The first stanza goes :—

'Fhir a dhìreas am bealach 's théid a null thar a mhàm,
Thoir soraidh no dhà le dùrachd bhuam.
Do ribhinn nam meall-shùil a's farsada gnè,
Do mholadh gu h-àrd bu dùthchasach;
Deagh nighean Ghilleasbuig de'n fhallain' a's feàrr
'Am misuich, 'an stàt, 's 'am fiùghantas;
Slàn iomradh do dh' Anna, gur math leam i slàn,
S air m' fhalluinn gur nàdar cùise sin, &c., &c.

If she composed the air to "Fhir a dhìreas am bealach," it is one of the most beautiful in our Highland minstrelsy. There is nothing south of the Grampians to be at all compared with it. The writer hardly thinks, however, that she could have composed such a lovely air. He is of opinion that it is much more ancient.

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* Roinn-eagail, dangerous promontories (?)

MAIREARAD NIGHEAN LACHAINN.

(MARGARET, DAUGHTER OF LACHLAN.)

Mairearad nigh'n Lachainn was an excellent poetess. There is a dispute as to whether she was a MacLean or a MacDonald. She lived in the island of Mull, and attained a great age. One of her poems was composed in 1702, and another in 1757. The dates of her birth and death are not known.

Mr MacLean Sinclair speaks of her as follows :—"We are inclined to think that she was a MacDonald. We got the following account of her, October 14th, 1873, from a daughter of John MacLean, the poet, who told us that she had received it from her father. Mairearad nigh'n Lachainn was born in Mull, and lived and died there. Her father was a MacDonald, and her mother a MacLean. She was married and had a large family. All her children died before herself. She nursed sixteen MacLeans of the best families in Mull. All these, like her own children, predeceased her. She used to go very frequently to the grave of the last of them, and sit there. She was a very old woman, and was much bent by age. John MacLean took down several of her poems from oral recitation about the year 1816. In the heading of one of these poems he calls her Mairearad Dhòmhnullach, da 'm bu cho-ainm Mairearad nigh'n Lachainn."

Some of her principal songs are "Oran do Shir Iain Mac-Gilleain," of 66 lines; "Duanag do Chlann-Ghilleain," which is a short poem; "Gaoir nam ban Muileach"—the loud murmuring of the Mull women—a lament for John MacLean, chief of Duart, who died in 1716. This is a long poem of 176 lines, and it seems a very fine elegy, or lament, for a popular chief.

Another long song of 144 lines to Allan MacLean, is entitled "Oran do dh-Ailean Mac-Gilleain, Fear Bhrolais"; she calls it a "lunneag"—a ditty—the chorus of which is :—

Hi ri, ri, ri eile,
Horin o ro ho i o ho-eile,
Hiurabh i hu o ho na ho eile.

1st Verse.

Mo cheist an Leathanach mòdhar!
Gualla dheas dha 'n tig an còta,
'S feàrr a chuireas Gaill o'm meòiribh,
Siod' is pasmunn air do dhòrnaibh,
Mar a chàireadh tàillear dòigh orr';
Glan airgiod 'ad bhroilleach òrbhuidhe,
'S gur a math 'thig "scarf" de'n t-sròl dhuit,
Mu do mhuineal geal 'an òrdugh.

There is another long elegy by her to Sir Hector MacLean, who died in Rome in the year 1851, of 128 lines. It also seems a good poem of eight lines in each verse of which the following is a stanza :—

'Fhir 'tha 'n cathair an Fhreasdail
Cum-sa ceart agus còir ruinn,
'S cuir deagh sgeul ugainn dhachaidh,
Air Sir Eachann nan rò-seòl :
Tha e fad' uainn a 'fhearann,
Agus tamull air fògradh ;
Gur h-e sgeula mo sgaraidh
Càch 'bhi 'g aithris nach beò e.

We are glad to appropriate this excellent poetess, even if she had some MacLean* blood in her, as she certainly deserves a niche in the temple of Fame ; we only regret that so little is known of one who lived not so very long ago, and to such a great age. A fuller account of her poems and songs will be found in Mr A. MacLean Sinclair's "MacLean Bards."

BAINTIGHEARNA GHIUTHSACHAIN.†

(THE LADY OF GIUSACHAN).

Margaret MacDonell was a daughter of MacDonell of Ardnabie, in Glengarry. She was born about 1715, and was married to William Fraser, of Giùsachan and Culbokie. She had nine sons ; Simon, John, Archibald, Donald, Rory, and other four, whose names are not known. She was a very clever woman.

Simon left Scotland in 1773, and settled near Bennington in the state of Vermont. He was a captain in Burgoyne's army, and died in 1778. His youngest son, Simon, explored the Fraser River, which is named after him. Mrs Fraser's sons, John and Archibald, fought under Wolfe at Quebec. Donald and another were officers in the Austrian Army. Donald was killed on the battlefield in Germany. Two other sons died in India, one of them in the "black hole of Calcutta." One of her sons, Rory, was only a week old when the Hanovarian butcher, the Duke of Cumberland, sent an officer with some soldiers to set fire to her house. To this event she refers in the following stanzas :—

'Bhliadhn' a rugadh thus', a Ruairi,
'S ann a thog iad bhuainn na creachan.

'S trom 's gur muladach a thà mi
'Cumail blàiths air aois na seachduin.

Loisg iad mo shabhal 's mo bhàthach,
'S chuir iad mo thaigh-clàir 'n a lasair.

She also composed a lament for her son Donald. The first stanza of it runs as follows :—

Là na nollaig mhòir a b' fhuar
Fhuair mi sgeula mo chruaidh chàis,
Dòmhnull donn-gheal òg mo rùin
Bhi 'na shìneadh 'n tiugh a' bhlàir.

It extends to 28 lines, and is a fairly good poem. The date of her death is unknown.

ALASDAIR OG MACDONELL also belonged to the Glengarry branch of the MacDonells of Ardnabie. He was a contemporary of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, and was alive in 1751. There is a John MacDonell, Ardnabie, mentioned in 1744, but it is not known what relation he was to Alasdair òg MacDonell and Mrs Fraser of Culbokie, both of whom were of the Ardnabie family. The following is a stanza of Alasdair Og MacDonell's song.

"Mairi Nigh'n Deorsa."—Oran do'n Fhiodhail—(song to the fiddle).

Gu'm b' ait leam 'bhi làimh-riut
A Mhàiri nigh'n Deòrsa,
Deri ral dal deri
Re di ridil dan,
De tidil dan dan,
Tha gliocas is nàire
'Am Màiri nigh 'n Deòrsa
Deri ral dal deri
Re di ridil dan,
De ridil dan dan.
Guth do chinn 's taitneach leinn,
'S ait leam fhìn beò thu,
Gur suairc thu le sòlas,
Tha thu caoin ceòlmhor,
B' ait le m' chluais caismeachd bhuair,
'S leat gach buaidh òrain ;
Gu'm b' fheàrr leam na mìltean
Gu'm bithinn 's tù còrdte.

It extends to 96 lines, and seems a capital song and evidently the work of a talented man.

Tradition says that the following original MacDonell song was the substance of an altercation between a father and a daughter, the former abusing the MacDonells with gross invective, and the latter extolling that illustrious race with appropriate encomiums. It is entitled "Oran do

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* The MacLeans were brave and stubborn warriors, as instanced in the following stanza from "Oran nam Fincachan Gaelach" :—

Clann-'Illean o'n Dreòlluinn
'Théid sunndach 's an ruaig,
Dream a chlosadh ainneart,
Gun taing 'choisinn buaidh :
Dream rioghail do-chiosaicht'
Nach striochdadh do'n t-sluagh :
'S iomadh mile deas, dìreach,
'Bheir inntinn dhuibh suas.

† From Mr MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards."

Mhac Mhic Alastair," and said to have been composed in the days of Donald Mac Anghais Mhic Alastair of Glengarry, in whose veins the Ross branch had conjoined with the chief of the MacRonalds by the marriage of his grandfather and grandmother. Campbell is said to have been the satirist's name, and the mother of the poetess was a MacDonald. There are only two stanzas of the poet's, the rest of the song is ascribed to the poetess :—

AN T-ATHAIR (THE FATHER).

Thig Mac Shomhairle bho'n Rùta
Le 'chliabhan duilisg, 's le 'lùirich,
Air ghearran bàn bacach crùbach,
'Se 'ruith gu h-oitir nam mùsgan.

Thig Iarl Eura romh chial Dùragh,
Cho daondach 's nach faodar a channtas;
Cha stad e'n taobh so do'n Rùta,
'S bheir e maidhm* air Iarla Hounntaidh.

AN NIGHEAN (THE DAUGHTER).

Thig Mac Shomhairle bho'n Rùta,
'Marcach nam fàlairean crùitheach,
Nan steud fallain, meadhrach, sunntach,
Strian òir 'nan ceann air a lùth-chleas.

Thig Mac-Mhic Alastair air thùs ann,
'S Raonallach g'an còir 'bhi cliùiteach,
Ceannard bhàrd is chearach rùisgte,
Chuirinn geall gu'm b' fheàird a' chùis sibh.

Gheibht' 'ad bhaile beòir gun chunntas,
Iomairt thric air phìosan dlùtha,
Mac-na-Braich' air bhlas an t-shiùcair,
Air bhòrd aca 's aiseag dlùth air.

Thig Mac-Mhic-Ailein a Mùideart,
Le dheich ceud do dh'fhearaibh cliùiteach
Nan clogaid 's nan sgiath 's nan lùireach,
'S nan lann glas nach tais ri rùsgadh.

Thig Mac Athic 'Raonnuill bho'n Cheapaich,
Cùirt-fhear air 'fhaolum 'an Sasonn,
Nan steud lùthor meodhrach gasta,
'S greòdhnach a rachadh nan astar.

Dh' éirgheadh leat bho'n Ghleann-an-Chumhann
Oighreachan deas nan cùl buidhe,
Cinn-fheòdhna nach cuirt' am mughadh,
'S greòdhnach 'dh' fhalbhadh a' bhuidheann.

'Ailein ruaidh, le d' theangadh lùibte !
Théid mi 'd bhian, is chì do shùil e ;
Bho'n thréig thu na facaill bu chliùiteach,
Gu earras 'thoirt leat, 's nach b' fhiùghe e.

Ma ghearras tu slat 's dlùth-choill,
Togar do mhart anns an ùbhladh;
Bidh agad sreang air do chùlaobh,
'S tu 'marcachd air chnagaibh dlùtha.

'S binn leam an langan 's am bùireadh,
Miol-choin 'an ceangal ri d' lùithean,
'Bhi 'gad tharruing as an dùthaich,
Gu citsin a' Bhaile mhùraich.

Chunnaig mi long seach an rugha,
Crith air a bùird 's 'na siubhal,
Gaoth 'ga seòladh roimh chaol cumhann,
Clann-Dòmhnaill-an-fhraoich, a' bhuidheann.

Translated by Mr Ewan MacLachlan, Aberdeen.

THE FATHER (POET).

See Sumerled's great child from Rutha speed
With his dilse-pannier, and rag-fluttering weed,
He trots on the lame, lifeless lazy beast,
To dig for spout fish, his luxurious feast.

But Erra's Earl, who makes the valiant yield,
Shall bring his countless armies to the field
To Rutha's towers the hero bends his course,
And Huntly soon shall prove his mighty force.

THE DAUGHTER (POETESS).

Great Sumerled's great son, from Rutha speeds,
Illustrious rider of high-mettled steeds,
With thund'ring prance they beat the smoky plains
And sunbeams glitter from their golden reins.

Glengarry's chief shall lead the warlike throng,
With brave MacRanalds, famed in lofty song,
Oft cheers, thy boon, the bard and shiv'ring swain,
And threat'ning foes defy thy might in vain.

Oft near thy mansion, round the jovial crowd,
Health foll'wing health, the barmy beverage flowed,
While Malt's delicious son with virtues stored
In silver cups quick crossed the lib'ral board.

See Muidart's captain comes with soul on fire,
A thousand warriors march behind their sire,
With helmets, shields, and radiant mail display'd
Dire scene ! where these unsheath the azure blade.

The branch of Ronald comes from Keppoch's groves,
With easy grace the court-bred warrior moves,
His fiery coursers dart with lightning's pace,
Panting with joy to run in glory's race.

Near these the heirs of Cona's winding vale,
Their yellow tresses streaming on the gale,
Champions that never crouched to mortal foe,
With rapid march around thy standard flow.

Red-pated Allan ! loosely railed your tongue !
My wrath shall scourge you for the insulting song,
At spotless worth you aimed your vulgar jibe,
Deserting fame to gain a paltry bribe.

If once you dare to touch our sacred grove,
You'll pay the forfeit from your folded drove,
Your back-bound hands the felon's thongs shall tame,
And iron pegs torment your guilty frame.

How sweet to hear the yell of barking hounds,
Strung to your houghs inflicting wounds on wounds,
And dragging from the land the Knave of Knaves,
Doom'd, in some town, to toil with kitchen slaves.

I saw the barge that passed yon headland mound,
With bellying sails, she skimmed the frothy sound,
Her gallant crew Clann Domhnuill's matchless name,
That wears the branchy heath in fields of fame.

* Maoin.

SIR ALEXANDER, 1st LORD MACDONALD.

Among our clan bards the distinguished subject of the present sketch deserves a high place. Sir Alexander MacDonald, sixteenth baron, and ninth baronet of Sleat, was on the 17th of July, 1766, created a peer of Ireland by the title of Baron MacDonald of Sleat and County Antrim.*

In May 1761 he obtained a commission as ensign in the Coldstream regiment of Foot Guards, and on the 3rd of May, 1768, he married Elizabeth Diana, eldest daughter of Godfrey Bosville of Gunthwaite, county of York, by whom he had a family of seven sons and three daughters.

He was educated at Eton, and turned out a highly accomplished scholar and musician, and a very keen politician. He took a considerable interest in literature, and was elected a member of the Society of Antiquaries. His taste for music led him to encourage those who took an interest in the arts. A celebrated harper named O'Kane, who travelled in the Highlands in those days, was often entertained by his Lordship, and he used to be delighted and charmed with his performances.

Gunn, in his work on the harp, published in 1805, remarks that "no one was better able to feel and to estimate the superior talents of O'Kane, for I can vouch Lord MacDonald to have been one of our best amateurs on the violin, and one of the best judges of musical talents of that period. There had been for a great length of time in the family a valuable harp key; it was finely ornamented with gold and silver, and with a precious stone. This key is said to have been worth eighty or one hundred guineas, and on this occasion our itinerant harper had the good fortune of being presented by Lord MacDonald with this curious and valuable implement of his profession."

In December, 1777, letters of service were issued to his Lordship to raise a regiment in the Highlands, with an offer of a lieutenant-colonelcy, He declined the rank, but recommended that it should be given to Major MacDonald, Lochgarry, who was in consequence at once appointed.

Lochgarry raised a fine body of men, numbering 1086, which was afterwards known as the 76th or MacDonald Highlanders. His Lordship was distinguished from the other barons of the family by the appellation of the "Morair Bàn," or the fair-haired lord, and "being an English-bred chieftain and given to increasing his rents, he was somewhat unpopular with his principal tenants, several of whom combined to keep the lands at the old rents, and many of them feeling keenly the hard pressure of the times, were forced to emigrate."*

At the time of Dr. Johnson's visit to Skye there was an emigrant ship, called the Nestor, in Portree Harbour to carry off the emigrants. Dr. Johnson's profound intellect saw at a glance the mistake of "educating a young heir to a great estate, at a distance from, and in ignorance of the country where he has so high a stake; he cannot acquire a knowledge of the people, can form no local attachment, be a stranger to his own property and to his tenants, is often disgusted with both, although the one is valuable by its produce, and the other estimable in character."

In continuation of the same subject Boswell records the following conversation as having occurred between his lordship and Dr. Johnson: —"Were I in your place, sir," said Johnson, "in seven years I would make this an independent island, I would roast oxen whole, and hang out a flag to the MacDonalds." Sir Alexander was still stating difficulties. "Nay, sir," continued Johnson, "if you are born to object, I have done with you; sir, I would have a magazine of arms." Sir Alexander, "They would rust." To which Johnson replied: "Let there be men to keep them clean; your ancestors did not let them rust. Four years after this, Sir Alexander found that arms put in the hands of his people would not be suffered to rust, and that when an opportunity offered they were ready to take them up in defence of their country."†

Besides being a first-rate player on the violin of classical and general music, his lordship composed a number of strathspeys and reels, still very popular, such as "Lord MacDonald's reel," "Mrs MacLeod, Raasay," "Mrs MacKinnon, Corry," and several others. A famous Sleat violinist, named "Iain Ruadh (John Roy) Kennedy," was a great favourite of his and used often to be entertained at Armadale, in a musical capacity, and it is said that on one occasion, at least, his lordship tied Kennedy's arm to a chair, but the result was almost the same as if it had been free. The following is a selection from his poetical effusions:—

* MacKenzie's History of the MacDonalds.

* History and traditions of the Isle of Skye.

† General Stewart's Sketches of the Highlanders. vol. II., pp. 21-420.

Latin Verses.

Verses written by Sir Alexander, Lord MacDonald, addressed and presented to Dr. Johnson, at Armadale, in the Isle of Skye, in 1773.—

Viator o qui nostra per aequora
Visurous agros skiaticos venis,
En te salutantes tributim
Undique conglomerantur oris.

Donaldini, quotquot in insulis
Compescit arctis limitibus mare ;
Alitque jamdudum, ac alendos
Piscibus indigenas fovebit.

Ciere fluctus siste, Procelliger,
Nec tu laborans perge, precor, ratis,
Ne conjugem plangat marita,
Ne doleat soboles parentem.

Nec te vicissim poeniteat virum
Luxisse ; vestro scimus ut æstuant
In corde luctantes dolores,
Cum feriant inopina corpus.

Quidni ! peremtum clade tuentibus
Plus semper illo qui morritur pati ;
Datur, doloris dum profundos
Pervia mens aperit recessus.

Valete luctus ; hinc lacrymabiles
Arcete visus : ibimus, ibimus
Superbienti qua theatro
Fingaliæ memorantur aulæ.

Illustris hospes ! mox spatiabere
Qua mens ruinæ ducta meatibus
Gaudebit explorare cœtus
Buccina qua cecinit triumphos.

Audin? resurgens spirat anhelitu
Dux usitato, suscitat efficax
Poeta manes, ingruitque
Vi solita redivivus horror.

Abæna quassaus tela gravi manu
Sic ibat atrox Ossiani pater :
Quiescat urnâ, stet fidelis
Phersonius vigil ad favillam.

---

1. Oh traveller, who comest o'er our seas, to view the fair lands of Skye, look how the clansmen are gathering on all sides to give thee welcome.
2. MacDonalds all of them ; they have gathered from every island that lies in the ocean's embrace ; (they are children of the sea), it has fed them of yore, and in times to come they shall draw their food from ocean's stores.
3. Oh thou bearer of the whirlwind, do thou cease and no longer raise the billows ; and thou craft (which bearest the stranger) I pray thee, thou tossing craft, do not set forth (till the storms have ceased) lest the wife have cause to mourn her spouse, and the children to weep for their father.
4. Nor let it grieve thee (generous craft) (to see) them weeping for a brave man (lost) ; for we know how (like a living thing) grief boils up in thy heart when misfortune unexpected claims its victim.
5. And wherefore not ? for oft it is the lot of the beholder to suffer more keenly than the man whom they see snatched off by death ; and a tender heart has measureless depths of sorrow.
6. But adieu sadness ; hence, sorrow and tears. We shall go. We shall go, where mid proud scenes the memory of Fingal's halls is kept ever fresh.
7. And you our noble guest, soon your steps shall stray, where aroused by the winding ruins, your imagination will revel in exploring the gathering halls where oft the bugle has sounded victory (its victorious notes).
8. Can you not hear it ? Again the chieftain lives and breathes, the poets art summons the spirits back to life and gruesome horrors live again.
9. Thus the proud father of Ossian used to march forth shaking his brazen darts in his strong hand. But let him lie still in his grave, and let the faithful Phersonius (MacPherson) stand guard by the tomb.

LORD MACDONALD'S REEL.*

(MORAG NIGHEAN DHOMHUILL DUINN.)

A Mhòrag nighean Dhòmhuill duinn,
Tha thu cruinn sgiobalta ;
A Mhòrag nighean Dhomhuill duinn,
Tha thu cruinn bòidheach !

A Mhòrag bheag nighean Dhòmhuill ghibich,
Is ioma fear 'thug ribean duit ;
A Mhòrag bheag nighean Dhòmhuill ghibich,
Is ioma fear 'tha 'n tòir ort !

A Mhòrag bheag nighean Dhòmhuill uidhir
Thug mi cion an uiridh duit ;
A Mhòrag bheag nighean Dhomhuill uidhir,
Bhuilichinn† do phòsadh !

Thug mi cion ! 'us cion ! 'us cion !
Thug mi cion an uiridh dhuit,
Thug mi cion ! 'us cion ! 'us cion !
'S bhuilichinn do phòsadh !

I am also indebted to Mr Alexander Carmichael, one of the best living authorities on Highland tradition, for the following quaint poem composed by one of the semi-regal MacDonalds of the Isles, many of whom were poets :—

A nighean rìgh nan ròiseal soluis,
An oidhche bhios òirnn do bhanais,
Ma's fear beò mi'n Duntuilm,
Thig mi tòirleum do d' earrais.

---

* The words of this excellent reel song were kindly communicated by Mr Alex. Carmichael.

† A localism in Uist with the same meaning as "dh'fhuiliginn.

Gheibh tu ciad bruicean taghal bruach,
Ciad dòbhran donn dualach allt,
Gheibh tu ciad damh allaidh àil nach tig
Gu innis àrd Ghleannaidh.

Gheibh tu ciad steud stàtach luath,
Ciad bròc bruail an t-samhraidh,
'S geibh tu ciad maoilseach* maolmadh,
Nach teid'm buabhall'am faoilleach geamhraidh.

TRANSLATION.

Thou daughter of the king of the region of light,
On that night that thy wedding is on us,
If living man am I in Duntulm,
I will come bounding to thee with gifts.

Thou would'st get one hundred badgers, dwellers of banks,
One hundred brown otters, natives of streams;
Thou would'st get one hundred wild beauteous stags,
That will not come to the green folds of the high glens.

Thou would'st get one hundred swift stately steeds,
One hundred rein deer intractable of summer;
And thou would'st get one hundred hummeled red hinds,
That will not install in wolf-month of winter.

Sir Alexander MacDonald's predecessor and brother, Sir James MacDonald, was also a splendid scholar. He was styled the "Scottish Marcellus," and it is said of him that in extent of learning and genius he resembled the Admirable Crichton. Gaelic elegies were composed for him by his brother, "An Ciaran Mapach," and John MacCodrum, the famous Uist bard. He attained in an eminent degree to a knowledge of mathematics, philosophy, languages, and in every other branch of useful and polite learning. The example of his learning and virtues, his kindly feelings towards his people, and the encouragement and improvements he contemplated for them, would, no doubt, have produced incalculable advantages. His accomplishments could have been understood and appreciated by the gentlemen farmers, who were so well educated that conversations were frequently carried on by them in the Latin language.† He was educated at Eton, travelled on the Continent, and died at Rome on the 26th July, 1766, in his 25th year; greatly regretted by all who knew him.

It may not be out of place here to mention a very fine lament that was composed on the death of one of the MacDonalds of Kingsburgh, Skye, entitled "Cumha do dhuine uasal de Chlann Dòmhnaill."

James, first MacDonald of Kingsburgh, was the second son of Donald Gruamach, fourth Mac-Donald of Sleat. He was succeeded by his son John, and John by his son Donald. This Donald was known as Domhnall MacIain Mhic Shenmais. He was a distinguished warrior, and defeated the MacLeods in several engagements. Alexander, his eldest son, and successor, fought under Montrose and was killed at the battle of Killiecrankie in 1689. It is to him that the lament is supposed to refer. The song describes his prowess in war, and traces his relationship to the chief of the MacDonalds, to Gilleasbuig (na Ceapaich), Mac 'Ic Ailein Clan Ronald, MacKinnon, Earl of Antrim, &c. It extends to 60 lines of 6 lines in each verse, of which the following is the first stanza* :—

Ge socrach a tha 'n leaba so,
Gur h-olc a' chulaidh chadail i,
'S a' mhuintir a dh'fhalbh fada bhuainn
'S gach aon neach a bhi togradh oirnn:
B' iad fhéin na fir 'bu taitniche,
'S ann aca bha'n deagh ghnàths.
B'iad fhéin, &c.

CAPTAIN DONALD ROY MACDONALD OF SKYE.

Another poet of Uist extraction was Captain Donald Roy MacDonald, of Knockow, Skye, brother of Captain Hugh MacDonald of Baleshare, North Uist, and a grandson of Sir James MacDonald of Oronsay. I am indebted for the following notes regarding this distinguished Highland warrior and poet to an excellent paper by Mr William MacKenzie of the Crofters Commission, published in the *Glasgow Herald*, of 16th May, 1878, on the famous MacLean physicians of Skye, who had been hereditary physicians to the MacDonalds for centuries. This Donald Roy MacDonald was wounded in the foot when walking off the Culloden battlefield, and was in consequence much hampered in his movements. He proceeded, however, by land to Loch Torridon, and took a boat to Troternish, in Skye, arriving at the house of the famous Dr. MacLean of Cuidrach, on the 8th day after the battle. Here the wound was dressed, and the "cripple captain," as we are informed by the "Lyon in mourning," continued in the surgeon's house without any molestation till Sunday, June 29th, when Prince Charlie landed in the Isle of Skye with Miss Flora MacDonald. "We hear of him afterwards riding the surgeon's horse while carrying out various missions in the interests of the Prince, and finally

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* From maol, bare, bare-headed, tonsured, hummeled; probably intended for maoisleach, roe, doe.

† Stewart's Sketches.

* From A. M'Lean Sinclair's Gaelic bards.

after bidding farewell to the Royal fugitive at Portree, he returned to his old quarters at Shulista. Donald Roy was a classical scholar, and during his retirement after Culloden, he beguiled the weary hours by composing Latin verses dealing with the situation in the Highlands." One of his poems is specially devoted to the wounded foot, and is entitled "De Pede Donaldi MacDonald in prælio Culoddino plumbea glande vulnerato." In the last verse we have a tribute to the assiduity and skill of the doctor in curing the wounded limb, together with a prayer to the beneficent Builder of the universe to favour his efforts :—

Interim curat medicus mederi
Sedulus partem mihi valneratam
Et peccor coeptis faveat benignus
Conditor Orbis.

None of his effusions in Gaelic have been preserved so far as I am aware, but it is more than likely that he did compose something in his native tongue before he tried such a difficult language as Latin.

There is also a beautiful "Ode to Scottish Music" by a MacDonald, better known as "Mathew Bramble," the author of Vimonda, &c., whose genealogy I have not yet made out, but he deserves mention as his name has long since been forgotten. Ode to Scottish Music :—

What words, my Laura, can express
That power unknown, that magic spell
Thy lovely native airs possess
When warbled from thy lips so well,
Such nameless feelings to impart
As melt in bliss the raptured heart.

No stroke of art their texture bears
No cadence wrought with learned skill ;
And though long worn by rolling years,
Yet unimpaired they please us still ;
While thousand strains of mystic lore
Have perished, and are heard no more.

Wild as the desert stream they flow,
Wand'ring along its mazy bed ;
Now scarcely moving, deep and slow,
Now in a swifter current led :
And now along the level lawn
With charming murmurs softly drawn.

Ah ! what enchanting scenes arise
Still as thou breath'st the heart-felt strain !
How swift exulting fancy flies
O'er all the varied sylvan reign !
And how thy voice, blest maid, can move
The rapture and the woe of love !

There on a bank by Flora drest,
Where flocks disport beneath the shade,
By Tweed's soft murmurs lull'd to rest,
A lovely nymph, asleep, is laid :
Her shepherd, trembling, all in bliss,
Steals, unobserved, a balmy kiss !

Here, by the banks and groves so green,
Where Yarrow's waters warbling roll,
The love-sick swain, unheard, unseen,
Pours to the stream his seeret soul :
Sings his bright charmer, and, by turns,
Despairs, and hopes, and fears, and burns.

There, night her silent sable wears,
And gloom invests the vaulted skies ;
No star amid the void appears,
Yet see fair Nelly blushing rise,
And lightly stepping, move unseen,
To let her panting lover in.

But far removed on happier plains,
With harps to love for ever strung,
Methinks I see the favour'd swains,
Who first these deathless measures sung,
For sure I ween no courtly wight
Those deathless measures could indite.

No, from the pastoral cot and shade
Thy favourite airs, my Lora, came,
By some obscure Corelli made,
Or Handel, never known to fame !
And hence their notes from nature warm,
Like nature's self, must ever charm.

Ye sp'rits of fire for ever gone
Soft as your strains, O be your sleep !
And if your sacred groves were known,
We there should hallow'd vigils keep,
Where, Laura, thou shouldst raise the lay,
And bear our souls to Heaven away.*

In MacLean Sinclair's Glenbard collection there is a lament for young John of Scalpa by his sister, which is either by a MacDonald or MacLeod, probably the former. It consists of 88 lines, eleven verses of eight lines in each verse, of which the following is the 1st stanza :—

"'Se'n sgeul a fhuair mi 'n dràsta
Nach do leig dhomh air chòir :
Is iombuaineach na teasaichean
A ghrab mi gun bhi falbh ;
Cha bu toiseach faochaidh dhomh,
Bhi smaointeachadh Iain Og
'Chur 's a' chiste chaoil 'am falach
Air a sparadh leis an òrd."

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* Logan's "Scottish Gael."

GILLEASBUIG NA CIOTAIG.

(ARCHIBALD MACDONALD.)

The Rev. Archibald MacDonald, Kiltarlity, joint editor of the history of the great Clan Donald, in his excellent work on the Uist bards, published in 1894, gives by far the best account I have met with of his distinguished namesake and fellow-countryman, and I avail myself of his labours in giving a brief description of the author of the famous comic song "An Dotair Leòdach." Archibald MacDonald, better known to his countrymen as "Gille na ciotaig," was born at Paible, in North Uist, about the middle of the 18th century. He received all the education he possessed at the parochial school of his parish, the only one available in his day. When Sir James MacDonald of Sleat (at the time our poet was a youth), with a number of Uist and Skye gentlemen, was deer stalking in the hills there, they came across a sheiling or àiridh where the parents of the bard were residing for a few weeks with their cattle and sheep—a very old custom in the Highlands. The good wife, with that warm hospitality so characteristic of the Highlanders, offered them a drink of milk of her heather-fed cows—"bainne air àiridh"—which is well-known to have a peculiar sweetness of its own. Sir James, in his usual affable manner, conversed with her in her native language, asking her about the welfare of her family, &c. She told him that two of her sons were at school at the west side of the island, and that one of them had been born with adefective arm and short, with only rudimentary fingers. Sir James asked his name, and when told him that he was baptised Gilleasbuig (Archibald), he remarked "it was a pity they did not call him Coll, so that there would be another Colla Ciotach in the MacDonald clan."

Fortunately for our bard, the sound arm was the right one, so that he was able to use it in various ways, and being an expert writer, he was employed by Alexander MacDonald, the bàillidh breac—the speckled factor—a son of "Alasdair Mac Dhomhnuill," to whom Mac-Codrum had composed an elegy—as clerk while he held the factorship of the Clan Ronald estate of South Uist. It was on the occasion of this hunting excursion that Sir James got shot in the leg by MacLeod of Tallisker's gun going off by accident, and it was with difficulty that the crofters of North Uist were prevented from laying violent hands upon him, Sir James's robust frame never recovered from the shock of the accident. It was then that his kinsman, MacDonald of Vallay,* composed the well-known piobaireachd, "Cumha na coise," for him.

Our poet, like all true bards, had an ambition to immortalise his name by publishing his poems, and with that intention he started for Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, in order to carry his object into effect, but he only got as far as Fort Augustus, where he took ill and died, and he was buried there, The spot where he lies can't now be traced, which is a great pity, as he was considered the cleverest of all the Gaelic comic bards.

It is said that while at Fort Augustus he met with Alexander Stewart, who had been parochial schoolmaster of North Uist—the author of "A Mhàiri bhòidheach, 's a Mhàiri ghaolach," and that his manuscripts, having fallen into Stewart's hands after MacDonald's death, formed the foundation of the volume of Gaelic poems called "Stewart's Collection." Many of his satires and lampoons have been lost, but sufficient have been preserved to stamp him as a first-class Gaelic poet. One of his most amusing songs is his lampoon on the Doctor Leòdach, Dr. MacLeod, of which the following stanzas, to suit the translation, will give an idea of the song to non-Gaelic speaking people :—

Thugaibh thugaibh òb òb,
An Dotair Leòdach 's biodag air,
Faicill oirbh an taobh sin thall,
Mu'n toir e'n ceann a thiota dhibh.

Biodag's an deach an gath-seirg,
An crios seilg an luidealaich ;
Bha seachd òirlich oirre 'mheirg,
'S gur mairg an rachadh bruideadh dh' i
Thugaibh, &c.

Bha thu 'na do bhasbair còrr,
'S claidheamh mòr an tarruing ort,
An saighdear is mios' aig Righ Deòrsa
Chòmhraigeadh e Alasdair.
Thugaibh, &c.

Claidheamh agus sgàbard dearg,
'S cearbach sud air amadan,
'Ghearradh amhaichean nan sgarbh,
A dh' fhàgadh marbh gun anail iad.
Thugaibh, &c.

Gu'm biodh sud ort air do thaobh,
Claidheamh caol 's a' ghliocartaich ;
Cha'n'eil falcag 'thig o'n tràigh,
Nach cuir thu barr nan itean d' i.
Thugaibh, &c.

* He also composed Sir James MacDonald's Salute after he got better.

Translation by Mr L. MacBean of some of the verses.

At you ! at you ! bo, bo, bo !
Take care what may become of you,
The Doctor with his dirk may go
And take the head of some of you.

See on his belt, with rags and dust,
The dirk with all the rust of it ;
'Twould kill a man with sheer disgust
If he should get a thrust of it.
At you ! &c.

As fencer bold he used to swing
His sword, but made so small a stir,
The poorest soldier of the king
Would dare to fight with Allaster.
At you ! &c.

Claymore and scabbard bright he vaunts,
And clumsily he carries them ;
He chops the heads of cormorants,
And hews and hacks and harries them,
At you ! &c.

Brave at his side the sword must be
That he must clank and rattle with,
And ne'er a bird can come from sea,
But he will b)ldly battle with.
At you ! &c.

The Skye people, the writer concluded, have always been under the impression that the "Doctair Leòdach" referred to in the above excellent song, was the famous Dr. Bàn MacLeod of Skye, but I am informed by Mr Alexander Carmichael, the author of "Or agus Ob"—Hymns, Incantations—that the Dr. MacLeod mentioned in the song was a son of the Rev. Mr MacLeod, of St. Kilda, who had been officiating there for some years, during which time the subject of the song was born there. This, of course, gives more point to the sallies of wit and humour displayed by our author, and his ridicule of him as a martial man, even though he did strut about in his Highland garb.* MacDonald nick-named him "An Gioban Hirteach," as he was such a fop, always parading in full Highland dress, and addresses him as follows—(one of three stanzas) :—

Gu seinn mi 'n Gioban Hirteach dhuit,
'S e nis a' tigh'nn do'n dùthaich ;
Cha dean mi di-chuimhn' idir air,
'S ann bheir mi tiotal ùr dha ;
Ma dh' fhalbh e uainn gu briogaiseach,
Gu'n d' thainig e gu biodagach,
'S cha'n fhaigh e 'n àite bhrioscaidean,
Ach iseanan an t-sùlair.

Another of his amusing poems is in the form of a "sgiobaireachd"—feat of navigation—supposed to have been a tempestuous voyage in a small ricketty craft from Lochmaddy to some other port in the western isles.

A gentleman in Skye, an ill-tempered, old farmer at Bernisdale, South Snizort, fared badly at his hands. The occasion was his horse having being pin-folded for having strayed on to the farm. The poet had his revenge on the inhospitable old farmer by describing him as the ugliest man in the sheriffdom, and predicted that there were terrible things in store for him. He says:—

Bodach Bhearnasdail a Uinnis ;
Duine 's gràinnde 'tha 's an t-Siarrachd
Bodach Bhearnasdail a Uinnis,
Ceann-cinnidh gach déistinn :
Amhuich fhada corra-ghridhich,
Nì thu fhathast caimb a ruidheadh :
Amhuich fhada corra-ghridhich,
Nì na fithich feusd ort !

His satire on the servant at Dunvegan Inn, in Skye, was also very good. She turned him out of bed saying the Uist packet, by which he was to leave, had arrived, and gave his room to a friend of her own. It was a false alarm, and she had cause to regret it when the bard launched forth, to the air of "Ben-Dorain" :—

Cha do chuir mi ùigh 's an té sgeòdalaich
Ged chuireadh i gùntanan sròil oirre :
Rannsaichidh mi thu bho d' aghaidh gu d' chùl,
O d' mhullach gu urlar do bhròg an.

One of his favourite butts was a South Uist man named Aonghus MacCallum, who went under the nick-name of the "famhair" (giant), not on account of his stature, but rather on account of his intellectual obtuseness—body without mind. He was an old soldier, who was in the service of the Duke of Cumberland's army, and the bard being a rank Jacobite, had no high opinion of his courage or patriotism. It is more scurrilous than witty, and extends to 64 lines. His other satire on the "famhair" was composed on account of his having appeared at a wedding uninvited, which is considered a gross piece of impertinence in the West Highlands.

His "Marbhrann do Iain Ruadh Pìobair"—elegy on John Roy, the piper—and its companion song, the "Aiseirigh Iain Ruaidh"—John Roy's resurrection—are, according to the author of the "Uist Bards," master-pieces of wit. It is said that the hero of both poems was well pleased with the jokes, and paid the bard a sum of money for them. His song to Lochiel, to the air of "Tweedside," was not considered by MacKenzie of sufficient importance to be included amongst his "Beauties of Gaelic poetry," but it seems a fairly good song, consisting of 15 verses of eight lines in each, 120 lines in all, in which the chief of the Camerons gets a good deal of praise.

* MacLeod was a surgeon in the army, and wore the kilt on his retirement.

"Banais Chiostal-Odhair" relates to "Ciostal" in Skye, the scene of a riotous wedding festivity at which the bard was present. The following amusing stanzas give a graphic description of the confusion and excitement among the guests when they began fighting :—

A' bhanais a bha 'n Ciostal-Odhar,
Ann an Ciostal-Odhar, Odhar,
A' bhanais a bha'n Ciostal-Odhar,
Cha robh fòghail chòir oirre.

Thàinig fear a stigh 'g am' ghriobadh,
Dh' innseadh gu'n d' thàinig am pige,
Fhuaras botal, lìonadh slige,
Bu bhinn gliog 'us crònan.

Thàinig fear a nuas le mi-mhodh
Gus e féin a chur 'an ìre,
Thòisich e air bleith nan ìongnan,
Gu mi-féiu a sgròbadh.

Ach labhair mise gu fiadhaich,
Ma 's e mi-stàth 'tha thu 'g iarraidh,
Gur dòcha gu'n cuir mi 'n fhiacail
Air iochdar do sgòrnain !

Fear ri caoineadh, fear ri aighear.
Fear 'n a sheasamh, fear 'n a luidhe,
Fear a' pògadh bean an taighe,
Fear a' gabhail òrain !

The other nine verses are equally amusing. All MacDonalds owe a debt of gratitude to our genial clansman the Rev. Archibald MacDonald, Kiltarlity, for having placed the Uist bards in their position before the world, and especially for having secured some of the songs and poems of this undoubted wit and genius from oblivion.

I am sorry I can't claim MacCodrum as a clansman, but as it has been alleged that the MacCodrums—a name long extinct—were a sept of the MacDonalds, and his having been bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat, in Skye, I shall briefly mention some of his songs to the MacDonalds—his favourite clan. Sir James MacDonald made him his family bard, with an annual pension. Nearly all MacCodrum's patriotic songs were composed either to the clan MacDonald in general, or some of its more noted scions. He exulted in the heroic history of his favourite clan and the great men it produced, and he lavishes all the power of his eloquence in singing their praises; and for a man who could neither read nor write, he showed a singular acquaintance with the history of the MacDonalds, and other Highland clans. One of his most noted poems to an individual is that to Captain Allan MacDonald, Kingsburgh. In it the last two verses are devoted in praise of his wife, the celebrated Flora MacDonald, the only woman he ever eulogized in song.

"Tàladh Iain Mhùideartaich" is another splendid poem which, tradition says, was an example of his extempore versification. It was composed to Clan Ronald's heir, the famous John of Moidart, the grandfather of the present head of the house, Admiral Sir Reginald MacDonald, K.C.B. It is said to have been composed under the following circumstances :—MacCodrum, who was, like most of the bards and minstrels of ancient times, of a roving disposition, was one day seen approaching Nunton House, in Benbecula, then a residence of the Clan Ranald. Mac 'Ic Ailein, the chief, happened to be walking about leading his heir, Iain Mùideartach, by the hand at the time, and sent the boy to meet the bard, giving him a gold coin to present to him if he would compose a song without further preparation. MacCodrum, on receiving it, asked him if that was all the money he had, and on his replying that it was, the bard said—"Well, there is not another heir in the world that would give me all his possessions but yourself," and taking the child up in his arms walked to the house with him but would not part with him until he composed a song in his praise. The bard asked to be allowed to walk once round the garden, and after doing so, the poem was ready, and sung to Iain Mùideartach.

In it he reviews the brave exploits of the boy's ancestors in many a hard fought battle, and traces their prowess from the days of Harlaw, when Lachlann MacMhuirich stirred up the courage of the MacDonalds with his famous poetical harangue, down to the battle of Kinloch-Lochy, called "Blar Léine," because the Highlanders fought in their shirts on that occasion, when Lord Lovat, and the master of Lovat, were both slain, and the Clan Fraser almost annihilated. Inverlochy, Killiecrankie, Sheriffmuir, at all of which the clan Ranalds fought with the traditional heroism of their race.

"Oran do Mhac 'Ic Ailein" is another excellent song he composed for the father of Iain Mùideartach shortly after his succeeding to his patrimony.

Another individual poem to a MacDonald was his song to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat—a long one of 15 verses of 8 lines in each verse. Some of his other best known poems are "Smeòrach Chlann Dòmhnuill"—the mavis of the MacDonalds —"Moladh Chlann Dòmhnuill"—in praise of the MacDonalds—"Oran do Shir Seumas Mac Dhòmhnuill"—song to Sir James MacDonald; "Marbrann do Alasdair MacDhòmhnuill"—elegy on the death of Alexander MacDonald; and another elegy on the death of Sir James MacDonald, who died at Rome.

The Alex. MacDonald above referred to was MacDonald of Kirkibost and Balranald. He was the seventh in succession of the MacDonalds of Balranald, of whom Mr Alex. MacDonald of Edenwood and Balranald is the eleventh and present representative. He had been factor for the chief of Sleat over his Long Island property, and seems to have been greatly beloved in his native land. He was also renowned for his great stature and physical strength. His tragic end is celebrated in the "Marbhrann"—having been drowned in crossing the channel that separated Kirkibost, where he lived, from the main island. Mac Codrum ranks very high among the Gaelic poets of the last two centuries, the only pity is that the clan has not got a stronger claim upon him. He died about 1796, and was buried in the Churchyard of Kilmuir, his resting place being marked by an amorphous block of gneiss said to have been selected by himself to be his own "carragh cuimhne."*

ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

(AN DALL MOR).

Another Uist bard of some eminence was Alexander MacDonald, commonly called "An Dall Muileach," from the fact of his father having resided for several years in the island of Mull, where he was probably born, and "An Dall Mòr" to distinguish him from another blind man of diminutive stature, who lived in the same locality. He was contemporary with John MacCodrum. His father, like a true Highlander, migrated back to Uist, and his posterity are still called the "Muilich," from their ancestor having resided in Mull for a time. Our bard was a man of fine physique, a regular specimen of a stalwart Highlander, and always went about dressed in the garb of Old Gaul. He lost his eyesight in early youth from a virulent attack of small pox, which was common enough in his day, and disfigured a great many people. He was a great rhymester, and being possessed of a very powerful memory, he was able to repeat the whole of the shorter catechism, and large portions of the Bible, qualifications which secured for him the appointment of catechist for the parish of North Uist, through which he travelled summer and winter, and it is said did a great deal of good by teaching the youth of his district the shorter catechism, a number of psalms, and portions of scripture.

Only three of his poems have been preserved. The first, "Oran do Eoghain òg Bhallaidh," was composed to Ewen MacDonald, Vallay, not the author of "Cumha na Coise," Sir James MacDonald's friend, but his grandson, who lived at Griminish. The second was to Ewen's brother, Major Alexander MacDonald, fourth of Vallay, on the occasion of his return from the south where he had been recruiting his health, and the third was to Robert MacDonald MacIntyre, Clan Ronald's piper, which he composed at Nunton, where the chief occasionally resided. These pieces, though short, are of considerable merit, and establish his fame as one of our Highland bards. It is not known how many of his poems have been lost, or when he died, but it is more than probable that though not a voluminous writer, he must have produced several more songs, or poems, of more or less excellence. As a bard he stands inferior to his countrymen John MacCodrum and Archibald MacDonald ("Gille na Ciotaig"), but his profession as a catechist probably interfered with his courting the muses to any great extent.

MICHAEL MOR DOMHNULLACH.

(BIG MICHAEL MACDONALD).

The only account I have met with concerning this bard is in the Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards," published in 1896. He was born in Uist about 1745. He received some education, and emigrated to America; went to Prince Edward Island in 1772, and settled near the Hillborough river. He married Ann MacEachern, a sister of Bishop MacEachern. He composed a number of songs but they all seem to have been lost, except the following one which is probably not generally known :—

O, 's àluinn an t-àite
'Th'agam 'n còis na tràghad,
'Nuair 'thig e gu bhi 'g àiteach anp
Leis a' chrann, leis a' chrann, O !
Nì mi'n t-aran leis na gearain,
'S an crodh bainne 'chur mu'n bhaile,
'S cha bhi annas oirnn 'san earrach,
Chuirinn geall, chuirinn geall.

O, 's fraoidhneasach, daoimeanach,
Glan mar sholus choinnlean,
Am bradan le 'chuid shoillseinich
Anns gach allt, anns gach allt, O !
Mear ri mire, 'leum na linge,
'S bòidheach milis leam do ghile ;
'S iomad gille 'bhios 'gad shireadh,
Anns an àm, anns an àm.

O, 's cùbhraidb na smùidean
A bhios dhe'n taighean-siùcair ;
Craobhan troma dlùth dhaibh,

* See Rev. A. MacDonald's "Uist Bards."

'S iad gun mheang, 's iad gun mheang, O!
'N àm an fhoghair b' e mo roghainn
A bhi tadhal gus an taghadh :
'S gu'm b' e 'm baothair' nach tug oidheirp
Air bhi ann, air bhi ann.

Bidh pìobaireachd 's fidhleireachd
Againn là Fheill-Mìcheil ;
Cluinnear sin air mhìltean
Nach bi gann, nach bi gann, O !
Na fir shona, 'n àm na Nollaig,
Bheireadh dorus air na sporain,
'S dheanadh " frolic " nach biodh dona
Leis an dram, leis an dram.

He lived for a winter alone at Cape Breton and could not induce his brother to again join him, in consequence of which he is the " bràthair " of the song. He was a man of much energy and perseverance, and died in 1815.

RAONULL MAC DHOMHNUILL, ANN AN EILEAN EIGG.

(RONALD MACDONALD, SCHOOLMASTER IN EIGG).

Ronald MacDonald, a son of the great " Alastair Mac Mhaighstir Alastair," leaves us in the dark as to whether he was a composer of any note or not. He published a collection of his own and some of his father's and Iain Lom's poems in 1776, and intended publishing more, but his first effort met with so little encouragement that he did not make a second attempt. His collection contains—at least the edition published in Glasgow in 1809—eleven songs and poems, without an author's name, out of 105 in all. If we presume that those without an author's name were composed by himself, then he would stand high as a poet, but I can't accept " Miann a' Bhàird a fhuair Aois," and " Mac Griogoir a Ruarudh," as having been composed by him. They existed long before his time, probably some of the others also.

Dr. L. Stern in his paper on " The Ossianic Heroic poetry," translated by Mr J. C. Robertson, H.M.I.S., attributes " Miann a' Bhàird Aosda "—the aged bard's wish—to him, because it first appeared in his book, but he has given no authority for doing so. This iconoclast seems to delight in turning everything Celtic upside down. His denunciation of MacPherson's Ossian has got such an evident bias about it that no Highlander is likely to believe him. It is one thing to be a Celtic scholar, and quite another thing to be a fair and impartial critic, which Dr. Stern, on his own showing, certainly is not. It is not by denouncing MacPherson as a forger and a liar, that he will be able to convince Highlanders of the falsehood of the Ossianic poems. The most that he or any other critic need hope for is, that MacPherson may have linked some fragments together, or even filled up a few gaps, but that would not make the main poems out to be forgeries. He should be able to separate these fragments and restored gaps, and point out wherein they differ from the original. What stirred the bile of those critics from the beginning was the fact that MacPherson unexpectedly tapped a new mine in literature amongst a people who were reckoned by ignorant outsiders as wild savages.

As regards " the aged bard's wish," it has no resemblance to modern poetry ; it has a much more ancient flavour about it. In the introduction to the translation of the poem in MacDonald's collection, in which I entirely concur, it says :— " From the poem it may easily be perceived that the doctrines of Christianity were unknown to the poet. The Elysium of Bards upon Ardven, the departure of the poet's shade to the hall of Ossian and Daol, his last wish of laying by his side a harp, a shell full of liquor, and his ancestors' shield, are incompatible with the Christian notion of a future state. From the poem itself it is evident that the Bard who composed it lived in times later than those of Ossian, and at a period when the manners of the Caledonians had undergone a considerable change. In Ossian's poems there is not a passage which alludes to the pastoral state. Hunting and war were the sole occupations of Fingal and his people. The art of taming cattle was not cultivated in the days of Ossian ; the pastoral life was unknown to him."

Ranald MacDonald does not claim the poem. He knew too well that if he did he would not be believed by his countrymen, why then force it upon him. He merely calls his book a collection, and so it is. In this he was perfectly honest, The character of the poem will be best understood by quoting a few verses with a literal translation. It extends to 144 lines. Mrs Grant of Laggan, says it was composed in Skye ; however, she throws no more light upon the subject, nor does she give her reasons for so localizing it. The mention of " Treig*" (Loch Treig) points, in the opinion of many, to Lochaber as the scene of the poem.

O càraibh mi ri taobh nan allt,
A shiùbhlas mall le ceumaibh ciùin,
Fo sgàil a' bharraich leag mo cheann,
'S bi thus', a ghrian, ro-chàirdeil rium.

O, place me near the brooks, which slowly move with gentle steps ; under the shade of the shooting branches lay my head; and be thou, O sun, in kindness with me.

* Supposed to be Loch Treig in Lochaber.

Mrs Grant translates the verse as follows :—

O lay me by the streams that glide
With gentle murmurs, soft and slow,
Let spreading boughs my temples hide,
Thou sun, thy kindest beams bestow.

The last four verses contain internal evidence of the antiquity of the poem quite different from modern compositions.

O ! cuir mo chluas ri fuaim Eas-mòr
Le 'chrònan a' tearnadh o'n chreig ;
Bi' dh cruit agus slige ri'm thaobh,
'S an sgiath a dhìon mo shinnsìr 's a' chath.

Thig le càirdeas thar a' chuain,
Osag mhìn a ghluais gu mall,
Tog mo cheò air sgiath do luathais,
'S imich grad gu eilean fhlaitheis.

Far 'm beil na laoich a dh' fhalbh o shean,
An cadal trom gun dol le ceòil,
Fosglaibh-sa thalla Oisein a's Dhaoil,
Thig an oidhche 's cha bhi 'm bàrd air bhrath.

Ach O m' an tig e, seal m' an triall mo cheò,
Gu teach nam bàrd air àr-bheinn as nach pill,
Fair cruit 's mo shlige dh' iunnsaidh 'n ròid,
An sin mo chruit, 's mo shlige ghràidh, slàn leibh !

33 O place me within hearing of the great waterfall, with its murmuring sound, descending from the rock ; let a harp and shell be by my side, and the shield that defended my forefathers in battle.

34 Come with friendship over the sea, O soft blast, that slowly movest ; bear my shade on the wind of thy swiftness, and travel quickly to the isle of heroes.†

35 Where those who went of old are in the deep slumber, deaf to the sound of music. Open the hall where dwell Ossian and Daol. The night shall come, and the bard shall not be found.

36 But ah ! before it come, a little while ere my shade retire to the dwelling of bards upon Ardven,‡ from whence there is no return, give me the harp and my shell for the road, and then, my beloved harp and shell, farewell ! "

Another point against Ranald MacDonald being the author of " Miann a' Bhàird Aosda," is the fact that there are only twenty-seven stanzas in his version, whereas there are thirty-six in the entire poem. Is there forgery here again ? The modern scientific Celtic scholars should bring out a new edition of Ossian's poems with MacPherson's additions, and where he linked poems together, marked in red ink, with the reasons for the conclusions arrived at. The late Campbell of Islay's conclusions on the subject are the least convincing I have read.

† This was the Flath-Innis or Heaven of the Druids.

‡ There is no mountain now known as "Arden" or "Scur-eilt" which is also mentioned in the poem.

In any case, the Highlanders of Scotland have reasons for congratulation, because no other country has produced such splendid epic poems as the Ossianic poems, and even if they originated only in MacPherson's fertile brains, he must have been the greatest poetic genius of his age, and infinitely superior to any critic that has yet appeared.

DOMHNULL DOMHNALLACH.

(DONALD MACDONALD).

Donald MacDonald, better known as " Dòmhnall MacIain Oig," was a native of the island of Tiree, where he was born about the year 1773. He lived at Crossgaire, now a part of the farm of Hough. He had all the qualifications that go to make up the ideal poet of rural districts. He was full of humour, and his enemies had reason to dread his scathing wit, of which he could make such effective use in his lampoons. Further, MacDonald was a bit of an idler who could never bring his mind or body to submit to any yoke. Being an excellent player on the bagpipes it was his habit each winter to absent himself from home and billet himself on his friends in the township of Balameanach. These visits of his were occasions of great joy to the young people about. Dancing was carried on with great gusto, for in those happy days the Tiree people had their dancing-masters and musicians and change houses—indispensable adjuncts to an enjoyable Saturnalia. But it must be borne in mind that dancing was not the only attraction. There was the Céilidh with all its happy associations, when the fair damsel wicked and filled the crùisgean (an oil lamp) several times before the company dispersed. Grey-headed men discoursed on second-sight, Fingalian legends, stories of infants snatched off by fairies, adventures of smugglers, &c., while the younger portion of the company contributed their quota by singing songs.

MacDonald himself was one of the most famous taibhsearan—second-sight seers—in Tiree in his day. In versifying he frequently designated the object of his laudation or ridicule by a sobriquet, which, from its extreme appropriateness, clung like his shadow ever afterwards to the person so named, and even to his descendants. He composed a number of comic songs. His " Niall Mac Eòghain an Cuiridh," " Bodach càm Roasdale," and " An Turlaman," are still popular in Tiree, also " Oran an Eich " (song to a horse), and an amusing piece to a sailor who had to go a long

distance to see his lady-love, beginning as follows :—

Do ghlùinean air lùghadh,
A' direadh a' bhruthaich,
'S gur fada bhuait Ruaig
Le turraman mìn,
Tha oidhche a' tighinn
'S mise leam fhìn.

Another excellent one he composed to a man named Neil MacMillan and a lad named MacFadyen, of 120 lines, 10 lines in each verse. It relates to a cart accident that occurred when they were returning home from the mill. It seems that MacMillan was standing in the cart when the horse shied, and both were thrown out. When the bard saw that MacMillan was in danger, and being troubled about him, he sang as follows :—

Tha fleasgach 's na bailtean,
'Tha tuilleadh is sgairteil,
Théid ainm air mach do Dhunéideann,
Bho'n glac thu 'n làir Shas'nach
'S a chaidh thu g' a marcachd,
Gu'n d' spealg thu a chairt anns na speuraibh
Gur ghrianail thu' gearan,
Dh' fhalbh m' aobharrach geurain
A dheanadh dhomh 'n fearann a reubadh ;
Cha'n e 'tha mi 'g àireamh,
Ach thusa Mhic-Fàidein
Bhi 'n cunnart a' bhàis le do chreuchdan, &c.

Some of his other songs are, "Oran do dh' Eòghan Mac Gilleain, Ceannard dà-fhear-dheug's an treas réisimeid de Mhilisi Earraghaidheal," song to Hector MacLean of the 3rd Regiment of Argyllshire Militia. Fonn (chorus), "Gur h-i bean mo ghaoil an Spàinnteach ;" "Oran do Ghilleasbuig Mac Neil Fear na pacaide ann am Muile" (song to Archibald MacNeil of the steam packet, Mull). Fonn (chorus), "'Si deoch-slàinte 'n righ a's feàrr leinn ;" "Cumha do Niall Mac-Gillcain am Maor Bàn ann Tiritheadh, a chaidh a bhàthadh 's e 'tighinn a Ile 's a' bhliadhna 1809." (Lament for Neil MacLean the fair-haired ground-officer who was drowned coming from Islay in 1809), Fonn (chorus), "Gaoir nam ban Muileach."

The song on the death of Hector MacMillan's horse extends to 80 lines ; Niall Mac Eòghain's, to the air of "John Campbell of the Bank," 176 lines of 16 lines in each verse ; and "'Se Mo Laochan an Tàillear" (My hero is the tailor), 74 lines of 12 lines in each verse. In this song the bard pretends to praise the tailor for his skill in tailoring, but in his usual style he is applying his scathing wit and sarcasm throughout.

"Am Bàta Riomhach" (The beautiful boat), Fonn "A chomuinn rìoghail rùnaich," consisting of 80 lines and composed to Allan son of Angus, who was at the fishing in Tiree, and fell out of the boat into the sea.

"Cliù Ailein" (Allan's praise), a mocking song to Allan MacDonald when his fairy sweetheart was troubling him. It extends to 72 lines, 12 lines in each verse. It seems an able song, or luinneag, and is set to the air of one of Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's famous songs, viz. :—

I h-urabh o, i h-orin o,
I h-urabh o, i ho ro h-o,
I h-urabh o, i h-orin o,
H-i ri ri ri o h-i og o.

"Cumha A' Ghamhna" (The lament for the stirk), is a long poem of 120 lines consisting of a dialogue between the bard, his wife, and Charles Mac Àilein, over the following circumstance : Charles Mac Allan, who lived near the bard, threw an old mare over the rocks, and a great number of birds collected to feast on the carcase. Shortly after, the bard lost a stirk in the same place, and the birds collected in a similar manner to have a further feast, but the bard anticipated them by taking the stirk home. Catherine, the bard's wife, blamed Charles Mac Allan very much for having assembled the birds. Her concern at the occurrence is well exemplified in the following stanza :—

"Tearlach Mac Ailein a Mùidart,
Gur h-e 'rinn an diùbhail oirnne,
'Nuair a chruinnich e na biastan
Air an t-sliabh 'tha 'n taobh so 'n mhòintich ;
Fitheach is feannag is biatach,
Bu chomunn gun riaghailt dhòmhs' iad."*

It is a great pity that such an excellent comic poet should have experienced the pinch of poverty in his old age, and the marvel is that so many of his compositions have been preserved. He left his native island and went to live in Barra, where he died in very straitened circumstances in 1835, and my informant, the Rev. Donald MacLean, Duirinish, Skye, himself a native of Tiree, significantly adds, "the slothful shall be under tribute."

DOMHNALLACH NA TOISEACH.

(MACDONALD, FERINTOSH.)

The Rev. John MacDonald, D.D., was born in the parish of Reay, Caithness, in 1779. He became minister of the Celtic Church in Edinburgh, in 1807, and of Ferintosh in 1813. He was a man possessed of talents of a high order, and was a very eminent preacher. He composed a number of spiritual songs, and died in 1849. A few stanzas of 'An Aiseiridh" will convey an idea of his powers as a composer.

* From Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards.

Och, a luchd-àiteachaidh na h-uaigh' !
O'n dh' fhalbh gach àilleachd 'nis is snuadh,
'S anu oirbh a laigh an tosdachd bhuan ;
O ! c'uin a ghluaisear idir sibh ?

Caidlidh an durrag anns an ùir,
Is gabhaidh 'chuileag fois 'an cùil,
Ri doininn gheamhraidh 's gaillinn dhlùth,
Ach dùisgear leis an earrach iad.

Ach c'uin 'thig earrach 'thogas suas,
Luchd-còmhnuidh thosdach, chiùin na h-uaigh',
O ! c'uin a dhùisgeas iad o'n suain ?
Is làidir buan an cadal e.

Thig duilleach fhathast air a' ghéig,
Ged tha i lom an diugh gun sgéimh,
'Tha seargt', is pillidh 'ghrian air ais do'n speur,
An déigh 'dhol as an t-sealladh uainn.

His "Marbhrann do Mhaighstir Caldair"—elegy on Mr Calder—is a very long poem, consisting of three parts, and extending to 180 verses, or 1480 lines. He also composed a song and elegy to Dr Stewart ; one to Mr John Robinson, of 136 verses, to the air of "Is tu mo luaidh," etc., a poem on his visit to the island of St. Kilda in 1822. "The Christian's visit to Jordan," also in three parts, and many other sacred poems exhibiting a great deal of culture, true piety, deep thought, expressive language and scholarship.

REV. HUGH MACDONALD.

The Reverend Hugh MacDonald, of Portree, in the Isle of Skye, flourished towards the end of the last century and beginning of the present one.

There is not much known about him except that he was poetically and musically inclined. One of his songs at least, and a very comical one it is, has been preserved in Albyn's Anthology. It is a melody altogether different from the ordinary run of Highland airs. Its rhythm and measure are peculiar and striking, yet very melodious when well sung in slow strathspey time. It sets all musical scientific rules at defiance, and is none the less attractive for that. There are 50 bars of 2-4th time in it. The writer only knows of one other Gaelic air somewhat similar to it, where the chorus consists of five lines, and the verse of only one, as follows :—

Hillin beag o hi ri ruilean o ho,
Hu ru ri ruilean o ho,
Rill u Rill o oh ho rill ill ho,
Rill ho ro, ro ho bha-ho,
Hillin-beag o hi ri ruilean o ho.

Verse.

Thog iad orm gu'n d'thug mi gràdh dhuit.
Hillin beag, &c.

The first line of the chorus is sung slowly, and the others considerably quicker. The single line of verse is also sung slowly. In the Rev. Hugh MacDonald's both verse and chorus seem to go all together if it has all been noted correctly. The one stanza quoted in "Albyn's Anthology," with chorus, consists of 14 lines, the first line of which is :—

"'Nuair a thig an samhra' bi 'dh damhs' againn agus ceòl,"

and the chorus mixed up with the verse is —

Shùbl, ùbh, ubhan ;
Cò 'dh' fhaotas a bhi gun cheòl,
Shùbh, ùbh, ùbhan ! cò 'dh' fhaotas a bhi gun cheòl?
&c., &c.

A parody on this song was written by James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, which is really amusing. It is entitled "John of Bracadale" and runs :—

Came ye o'er by Mornich,
Saw ye John of Bracadale,
At his nose a siller quaich,
At his knee a water pail !
Copper nose and haffets gray,
Bald head and bosom hale,
John has drunken usquebae
Mair than a' loch Bracadale !
Hey John ! Ho John !
Hey John of Bracadale !
Hey John ! Ho John !
Wae's me gin ye should fail !
Auld John, bauld John,
Brave John of Bracadale !
But John will wear away !
An' the weary usquebae
Will grow cheaper by a third,
When they delve him in the yird !
O the gay hearts at Portree
Will lament sair for thee !
An' I mysel' raise sic a wail,
A' the rocks of Skye shall peal,
Hey John ! Ho John !
Hey John of Bracadale !
Hey John ! Ho John !
Wae's me gin ye should fail !
Auld John, bauld John,
Brave John of Bracadale !

RAONULL MAC IAIN MHIC EOGHAIN

(RONALD SON OF JOHN SON OF EWEN).

Ronald MacDonald was a native of Minginish, in the Isle of Skye, and flourished towards the end of the last century and first quarter of the present one. His occupation was that of a grieve, He was not only a true poet, but also a great wit. He composed a good many excellent songs, among which were "Marbhrann do dh' fhear Thalascair"

(1778), (elegy to MacLeod, Talaskir) ; "Oran an Acrais" (song to hunger) ; "Oran do dh' each crosda 'sa Chlaigionn" (song to a bad-tempered horse at Claggin) ; "Oran do'n Chreig Mhóir" (song to the big rock) ; "Oran an Uisge-bheatha" (song to whisky) ; "Oran, a rinneadh do choille bhig a bh' anns an Eilean Sgiathanach, mar gu'm b'i féin a bha 'ga dhèanamh" (song to a small grove in Skye, &c.) Most of these songs were published in Donald MacLeod's collection in 1811. Dr. Magnus MacLean in his excellent paper on "Skye Bards," published in the transactions of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, 1891-94—delivered as a lecture in December, 1892—relates a capital anecdote of our poet, which illustrates the wit of which he was capable on the spur of the moment. He and "Fear an Rudha" (a Mr MacAskill, or MacLeod, I am not sure which) met one day, and the following conversation passed between them : —"Ma ta, Raonuill," arsa fear an Rudha, "'s e mo fhradharc fhéin a tha 'dol air ais." "Ma tà," arsa Raonull, "nach neònach leibh e, 'fhir an Rudha, 's ann a tha mo fhradharc-sa a' 'dol na's fheàrr." "Tha sin neònach gu dearbh, a Raonuill," arsa fear an Rudha, "tha thu pailt cho sean riumsa." "Ma tà," arsa Raonull, "'s ann mar sud a tha. Am fear a chìthinn roimhe so 'na sheasamh leis théin air Cnoc, chì mi nise 'na dhithis no triùir e ;" which, being interpreted, means, Fear an Rudha—(Talaskir)—"My eye-sight is failing me very rapidly." Ronald : "You may think it strange, sir, but my eye-sight is getting better." Talaskir :—"That is strange, indeed, for you are quite as old as I am." Ronald, "yet it is so ; for, the man that formerly I would see on a hillock, I now see double or triple,"

A couple of stanzas of "Oran an Acrais"—song to hunger—will give an idea of his powers of composition.

Gur h-eòlach air an acras mi,
Tha 'theachdaireachd neo-inntinneach ;
Gnr tric a thug e turraig orm,
An uiridh roimh àm-dinnearach :
Am fear a bhios 'na dhraghaire
Neo-adhartach neo-inntrigeach,
Cho luath 's a gheibh e eòlas air.
Cha deònach leis a chuidhteachadh.

Thug e na h-ochd seachduinean
Air fasdadh 'na mo theaghlach-sa ;
Dh'fhiach e ri mo sporan,
Fhuair e cothrom math air fhaochadh ;
Thug e gach ni b'urrainn duine
A bhuileachadh dhe'n t-saoghal dhiom ;
Cha mhór nach d'thug e bàs dhomh,
Ach gu'n d' fhàg e 'na mo Raonull mi.

The following is a stanza from another song :—"Oran a rinneadh do choille bhig a bh'anns an Eilean Sgiathanach" (song to a small grove in Skye).

Bu bhadanach, soilleir, sùghmhor,
An cruth an robh mi 'san àm sin,
Gu flùranach, duilleach, àluinn,
'S mi 'g éirigh ri blàths an t-shamhraidh,
Gu meurach, meanglanach, duilleach,
Gu h-ianach, ribheideach, ceòlmhor,
Gu bocach, maoiseagach, meannach,
Nach iarr 'san earrach an cròdha.

Little else is known about him except that his songs were very popular in Skye, and must have been of some importance to have been included in Donald MacLeod's collection—the father of the present famous Skye poet, Neil M'Leod, said to be the best living Gaelic poet. The date of our poet's death is uncertain.

AM BARD CONANACH.

(THE STRATHCONNON BARD.)

Donald MacDonald, called "Am Bàrd Conanach," or the Strathconnon bard, was born in Strathconnon, Ross-shire, in 1780. Probably owing to the secluded position of his native glen, and the neglect of his parents, he received no English education, and his scholarship, so far as known, consisted in his being able to read Gaelic, which he must have studied deeply after, as shown by his command of the language in his songs.

The wild and romantic scenery of his native country inspired him at an early age with these poetical leanings, which, at a later period, burst forth into song. Not having been trained to any particular trade, he earned his livelihood as a sawyer, which did not require any special training. After being some years engaged at this occupation in his native glen, he removed to Inverness, where he set up as a regular sawyer. Like many of the sons of genius and song, MacDonald was of a congenial disposition and warm temperament, and the old, old story has to be repeated, he met with someone he loved better than himself, and stumbled and flounderred as these love-sick swains generally do, and his parents, fearing an elopement with the young girl of his choice, took all necessary precautions to prevent his doing justice to the young maiden, who reciprocated his attachment "not wisely, but too well," and the end was disappointment to both, with the inevitable—

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever !
Ae fareweel, and then for ever !
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee !

He ultimately married a young girl—a countrywoman of his own—named MacLennan, with whom he is said to have lived happily. All his poems had been arranged in MS. with a view to publication, but he was unfortunately seized with cholera in 1832—the first epidemic of the disease to this country—which soon terminated fatally. The only two songs of his which have been preserved, so far as I am aware, are, one to Napoleon Buonaparte, which he composed in Edinburgh, on witnessing the demonstrations of joy which took place on hearing of the result of the battle of Alexandria. It is a composition of considerable merit, of a martial and triumphant character, exhibiting poetical talent of a highly respectable quality. It consists of 28 verses, or 176 lines. The other was to his first sweetheart in which he laments, amongst other things, that they were not sailing away to Ireland, or somewhere else, and reiterates his former attachment, which, no doubt, was genuine. This song extends to 13 verses, or 101 lines, and bears upon the face of it a sympathetic regard for his old love. He is said to have been a man of a cheerful disposition, of middle stature, and an excellent and warm-hearted companion, much liked by all who knew him.

IAIN DOMHNALLACH.

(JOHN MACDONALD, LOCHBROOM.)

John MacDonald was a native of, and born at, Corry, Lochbroom, on Feb. 22nd, 1766. He was for some time tacksman of the farm of Scorraig, Lochbroom, and afterwards went to live at Crowbeg, in Lewis. He was a man of great poetic talents, and was author of the second set of the famous and ever popular song, "Màiri Laghach," winsome Mary. The original set was composed by Murdoch MacKenzie, Lochbroom, better known in his own country as "Murchadh Ruadh nam bò"—red-haired Murdoch of the cows (droves). MacKenzie, who was also a fairly good poet, produced the original song and air for his daughter Mary, who at a very early age managed his house after his servant had absconded when her services were most required in the sheiling, or mountain milk-house. In gratitude for his daughter's exertions at so tender an age, he composed the song for her, which is a fairly good one, and the air being original, and really beautiful, it soon attained a degree of popularity that its poetry would never have entitled it to, if composed to an old or inferior air. MacKenzie died in 1831.

John MacDonald adopted the air and composed a love song infinitely superior to the original of MacKenzie, and what is more interesting still, he eventually married his winsome Mary, who at the time the song was composed was only 12 years of age. MacKenzie in his "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry" says that MacDonald had composed many excellent poems and songs, and though Murdoch MacKenzie has the merit of having composed the air, MacDonald is entitled to the praise of "having sang that most beautiful of airs in language which for purity, mellowness, and poetry, was never surpassed." According to the Rev. Roderick MacRae, Free Church Manse, Carloway, Lewis, John MacDonald was, when a young man, teacher in Lochcarron parish, while the famous Mr Lachlan MacKenzie was minister, subsequently, he was tacksman of Scorraig, Lochbroom, and owner of a vessel of which he himself was skipper. Whilst in this latter capacity he was once storm-stayed in the harbour of Stornoway. Then it was that he saw his future wife, and on his way to Loch Torridon, with a fair wind, he composed his famous song to the youthful maid who was to be his wife. On one occasion, when on a visit to Ireland, the author, putting up at an inn, heard his own song sung in an adjoining room, which shows how readily a song that catches the popular ear and taste will travel.

The following five stanzas with translation will be acceptable to many. The entire song will be found in several musical and poetical works. :—

MAIRI LAGHACH.

Luinneag (Chorus).

Hó mo Mhàiri laghach,
'S tu mo Mhàiri bhinn,
Hó mo Mhàiri laghach,
'S tu mo Mhàiri ghrinn
Hó mo Mhàiri laghach
'S tu mo Mhàiri bhinn ;
Mo Mhàiri bhòidheach lurach,
'Rugadh anns na Glinn.

B' òg bha mise a's Màiri 'm fàsaichean Ghlinn Smeoil,
'Nuair chuir macan Bhenuis saighid gheur 'nam fheòil,
Tharruing sinn gu 'chéile ann an eud co bcò,
'S nach robh air an t-saoghal, a thug gaol co mòr.

'S tric bha mise 's Màiri, falbh nam fàsach fial,
Gun smaointean air fàl-bheart, gun chàil gu droch gnìomh,
Cupid ga n-ar tàladh ann an càirdeas dian,
'S barr nan craobh mar sgàil dhuinn, 'nuair a b'àird a ghrian.

Ged bu leamsa Alba, a h-airgid is a maoin,
Cia mar bithinn sona, gun do chomunn gaoil,
B' annsa bhi 'gad pògadh, le deagh chòir dhomh fhéin,
No ged fhaighinn stòras na Roinn-Eòrp, gu lèir.

Tha do bhrollach solais làn de shonas gràidh,
Uchd a's gile sheallas na'n eala air an t-snàmh,
Tha do mhin shlios fallain, mar eanach a' chàir,
Muineal mar an fhaoilean fuidh 'n aodann a's àille.

Tha t 'fhalt bachlach, dualach, mu do chluais a' fàs,
Thug nàdur gach buaidh dha, thar gach gruaig a dh'fhàs,
Cha'n'eil dragh, no tuairgne, 'na chuir suas gach là
Chas gach ciamh mu'n cuairt dhe, 's e' na dhuail gu 'bhàrr.

The late Professor Blackie, who caught the spirit and rhythm of Highland songs in a remarkable manner, translated it also—about the best I have seen, and the nearest to the original Gaelic—a few stanzas of which are appended. His opinion of the song was that it was a simple air, and to his ear, uncommonly beautiful.

Chorus.

Ho ! my bonnie Mary
My dainty love, my queen,
The fairest, rarest Mary
On earth was ever seen.
Ho ! my queenly Mary,
That made me King of men,
To call thee mine own Mary,
Born in the bonnie glen.

Young was I and Mary
In the windings of Glensmeoil,
When came that imp of Venus
And caught us with his wile ;
And pierced us with his arrows,
That we thrilled in every pore,
And loved as mortals never loved
On this green earth before.

Oft times myself and Mary
Strayed up the bonnie glen,
Our hearts as pure and innocent
As little children then.
Boy Cupid finely taught us
To dally and to toy.
When the shade fell from the green tree,
And the sun was in the sky.

If all the wealth of Albyn
Were mine, and treasures rare,
What boots all gold and silver,
If sweet love be not there ?
More dear to me than rubies,
In deepest veins that shine,
Is one kiss from the lovely lips
That rightly I call mine.

Thy bosom's heaving whiteness
With beauty overbrims,
Like swan upon the waters
When gentliest it swims :
Like cotton on the moorland
Thy skin is soft and fine,
Thy neck is like the sea-gull,
When dipping in the brine.

The locks about thy dainty ears
Do richly curl and twine ;
Dame Nature rarely grew a wealth
Of ringlets like to thine :
There needs no hand of hireling
To twist and plait thy hair ;
But where it grew it winds and falls
In wavy beauty there !

The remaining verses are in a similar strain, which accounts for the beauty and popularity of the song, and its beauty is enhanced ten-fold by being sung, and so it is with all Highland songs : the charm is in the singing of them, hence my great grief at the number of airs that have been lost. Mr MacDonald had eleven of a family, all of them born at Scorraig. As his children were growing up he removed to Stornoway, where his wife had some property. Afterwards he took the farm of Crobeg in the parish of Lochs, Lewis, where he died on the 16th of January, 1865, in his 99th year.

Rev. Mr Macrae says, " it was most interesting to listen—as it was my privilege to do—to his old Highland legends, which, if they had been preserved, would fill volumes."

His sons were also men of mark. His second son, Roderick, was editor of the " Pictou Observer " ; another, Alexander, was captain of an East India trader ; two were merchants in Stornoway, both of whom are dead. The youngest had the farm of Dun, Carloway, and was ground officer of the parish of Uig. He died in 1892. He was the father of Miss Maggie S. MacDonald, authoress of " My native hills for me " and other poems, of whom a sketch will appear later on. She is, therefore, a granddaughter of John MacDonald, the poet, and of Màiri Laghach, the subject of the famous second song. Several other descendants are also poetically inclined.

" Mr John MacDonald was author of several other popular songs, one in particular on the then Laird of Tulloch, who was also proprietor of a great part of Lochbroom." His excellent poems and songs were full of nerve, tact, talent, intelligence, and wit. His wife, " Màiri Laghach "—Mary MacIvor—was born in Stornoway on 4th January, 1786, and died in the same place on 5th July, 1869, in her 83rd year. I hope the present generation of his descendants wont let all his songs die out.

Subjoined is another beautiful translation of five stanzas of " Màiri Laghach " by a gifted Highlander, Mr D. MacPherson, bookseller, London. It is perhaps more poetical, but not so near the original as Professor Blackie's, or Evan MacColl's.

Chorus.

Sweet the rising mountains, red with heather bells,
Sweet the bubbling fountains and the dewy dells,
Sweet the snowy blossom of the thorny tree.
Sweeter is young Mary of Glensmole to me.

Sweet, O sweet ! with Mary o'er the wilds to stray,
When Glensmole is dressed in all the pride of May,
And when weary roving through the greenwood glade,
Softly to recline beneath the birken shade,
Sweet the rising, etc.

There to fix my gaze in raptures of delight,
On her eyes of truth, of love, of life, of light,
On her bosom purer than the silver tide,
Fairer than the cana on the mountain side,
Sweet the rising, etc.

What were all the sounds contrived by tuneful men,
To the warbling notes of the sylvan glen ?

Here the merry lark ascends on dewy wing,
There the mellow mavis and the blackbird sing.
Sweet the rising, etc.

What were all the splendour of the proud and great
To the simple pleasures of our green retreat,
From the crystal spring fresh vigour we inhale,
Rosy health does court us on the mountain gale.
Sweet the rising, etc.

Were I offered all the wealth that Albin yields,
All her lofty mountains and her fruitful fields,
With the countless riches of her subject seas,
I would scorn the change for blisses such as these.
Sweet the rising, etc.

RAOGHALL DONULLACH, ARDNIS.

(RANALD MACDONALD, OF ARDNESS).

Ranald MacDonald, of Ardness, Arisaig—not the son of "Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair" of the same name—was probably born towards the close of the last century. Very little is known about him except that he published a collection of Gaelic songs in 1821 (James Fraser, Inverness). The work has been long out of print, and extremely rare. The only copy I know of it is in the possession of Professor MacKinnon, of Edinburgh, who very kindly lent it to me for the purpose of making these extracts. It extends to 200 pages, and contains 48 songs and poems. The title of the work is as follows :—

"Orain
Le
RAOGHALL DONULLACH,
An Ardnis, Arisaig, Siorruichd Inbhirnis.

Maille Ri
Co-Chruinneachadh
Dàin Orain, etc.,
Le
Ughdairean Engsamhuil.

Inbhirnis :
Dealbh-bhuailt' le Seumas Friseal,
1821." 12mo pp. 200.

There are several songs in the work that I have never seen before, the respective airs of which I am afraid are lost, and there are also some old ones I knew, but had not seen in any other work. The first one is "Oran Do Mhac-Ic-Alastair Ghlinnegaraidh," air fonn, "Och ! a Mhaire mo dhunaich.". The next is "Moladh Nan Gàidheal."

Seisd (Chorus).

Horinn o ho i u o,
Horinn o ho i u o,
Horinn o ho i u o,
Ceum lùghor nan Gàidheal.

I have no idea to what air this song was sung, but the song itself seems a good one, consisting of 12 verses of 4 lines in each verse. The first stanza of which is as follows :—

'Se 'n diugh latha na coinneadh,
Leam is bòidheach ùr sealladh ;
Biodh sinn cridheil 'sa chomunn,
Cheann air sloinneadh 'nar Gaidheil.

There is also a very good one entitled "Oran do Mhac-Ic-Alastair Ghlinnegaraidh, air fonn—

"Tha tighinn fodham éirigh."

There are numerous other songs also in the same work, the most uncommon of which are the following :—"Oran Molaidh a Dh'Eithear a Bh' aig an Ughdair Rè Mòran Uine Ri Gnìomh:—

Faill ill i rinn O, na hùg a's ho ro eile,
Faill ill i rinn O, na hùg a's ho ro eile,
Faill ill i rinn O, na hùg a's ho ro eile,
Righlinn bhàidheach neo-chearbach,
'S tric a dh'fhalbh sinn le chéile.

"Oran do Lachun a' Choire."

Seisd (Chorus).

Horinn o ho i u o,
Horinn o ho i u o,
Horinn o ho i u o,
Ceum lùghor nan Gàidheal.

"Oran Rinneadh ann an Canai, Air do'n ùghdair Bhi Ri Port, 's e an Droch Chairtealan."

Seisd (Chorus).

Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
'S fhada am port a th' air breith oirnn.

"Oran Do Nighean Araid."

1st stanza.

Tha Sali 'na cailin cho ghrinn
Nach urra domh innseadh ri m' bheò :
Gu tarsada, banail, 'na ceum,
Gu bioraltach binn 'na glòir,
Gu iorganda, tarraganda, grinn,
Gu cruinneagach cruinn gu 'n sgòil,
Gu bradanda, sgadanda, seang—
Gun àrdan, gun mheang, gun bhòsd.

5 verses, 40 lines.

"Oran Gaoil."

1st stanza.

Fhir a shiùbhlas mu'n cuairt,
Thoir an t-soraidh so uam thar chaol,
Gu bean an fhuilt duinn,
Na'n tilleadh i ruinn mar shaoil :
Thug mise dhuit gràdh,
A mhaireas gu bràth, 's nach sgaoil :
'S biodh m' aire ort gach uair,
Le comaine bhuan, 's le gaol.

10 verses, 80 lines.

"Oran Do Reitheachan a Chaidh Bhàthadh."

Seisd (Chorus).

Ho i o hu ri ho ho ro thall,
Ho i o hu ri ho ho ro thall,
Ho i o hu ri ho ho ro rhall,
Cha cheil mi air càch nach d'rinn am bàthadh orm call.

8 verses, 64 lines.

"Oran Do Dh'Each, Mall air Thuras, 's gun 'n T-ùghdair Bhi 'na shlàinte."

Air fonn.

A chailin duinn a' chuailean réidh,
Huill ho mar bha mi féin;
A chaileag sin g'an tug mi spéis,
Gu'n d' fhàg thu féin fo mhulad mi.

11 verses, 44 lines.

"Oran Do Ghille Og, a Réitich Ri Bantraich, thug cùl ris 's a Phòs Sean Duine—Mar Gu B'e'n Gille òg a Dheanadh e."

Air fonn.

Chaidh an comunn, an comunn,
Chaidh an comunn air chùl;
Dhealaich comunn ri chéile,
'S rinn sibh fhéin comunn ùr.

10 verses, 80 lines.

"Oran Sealgair a chaill a Ghuna, 's a shaoil nach Fhaigheadh e co-math." 9 verses, 72 lines.

"Marbhrann Do Shim Mhorair A chailleadh Le Sgiorradh." This song has no chorus, but each verse is repeated. It extends to 14 verses of 5 lines in each.

"Oran Do Dhonul Dònullach."

Air fonn.

Horeann ho ro a ho,
'S mithich duinne éirigh, mo nighean donn.

13 verses of 2 lines.

"Marbhrann Do Thighearna Ghlinn-Alladail," the first stanza of which is—

"'S ioma fear a bha duilich,
Agus bean a bha tuireadh,
Mu cheann teaghlaich na h-urram,
A tha 'n Duneudain a' fuireach
'Na thigh geamhraidh 's nach urrainn a ghluasad."

22 verses, 110 lines.

"Oran Do Thé Araid."

Seisd. (Chorus)

Hi rill eile horo,
Ho ro hi rill horo,
Hi rill eile horo
Ho ro oir cù an t-Sealgair.

12 verses, 48 lines.

"Oran Le Té Araid Do Leannain."

1st stanza.

O! gur muladach tha mi,
Tha mo leannan air fàs rium 'an gruaim!
Thug mi gaol o cheann tamuil,
Tha té eile 'ga mhealladh sud uam;
'N uair a théid mi 's an leabaidh
Gur a h-aotrom mo chadal, cha suain;
Tha leann-dubh orm air drùghadh,
Gur tric snithe mo shùl le m' dhà ghruaidh.

6 verses, 48 lines.

"Marbhrann Mhic-Ic-Ailean Le Niall Mac-Mhuirich, Seanachaidh Chlann-Ranaill." 11 verses, 99 lines.

"Raghal agus Caristine," Ranald and Christina. This comical song has no chorus, but consists of 22 verses of 8 lines in each (176 lines). I heard it sung by an old man in Skye 45 years ago, to the air of "Chuir mi biodag anns a' bhodach 's leig am bodach ràn as," the same air as "An gabh thu bean, a Dhòmhnuill Bhig?" but have never heard it sung by any one since. It is one of those songs that will probably never be heard again.

"Oran Do Fhiadh, Le Dòmhull Mac Aonais ann na Gleannalladail;" no chorus; 11 verses of 8 lines in each.

"Oran Do Lochial a Tha Làthair" Le Gilleaspuig Donallach an Bàrd Uisteach.

Air fonn—"Tweedside"—15 verses, 8 lines each.

"Dàn Le Eachan Mac Leòid, a bha ann an Uist a chinne-Deas." No chorus. 30 verses of 4 lines in each, 120 lines in all. It is altogether a very good descriptive song or poem.

"Oran Do'n Chath-Bhuidheann Dhònullach, 'Nuair Bha Iad Dol Do America." As this is a very patriotic song I give it in extenso. It is sung to an air similar to "'Se mo cheist an gille donn," but whether the words were the original words to the air or not, I am unable to say. It was probably composed during the American War of independence, about or after the middle of the last century.*

ORAN

DO'N CHATH BHUIDHEANN DHONULLAICH,

'n uair Bha Iad Dol Do America.

LUINNEAG.

Bithibh eutrom, 's togaibh fonn,
Eireadh 'ur cridhe 'n 'ur com,
Dioladh a' ghloine gu bonn,
Air slàinte nan sonn flathasach,

'S iad na Gàidheil a fhuair an cliù,
Riamh o'n chaidh iad a nunn)
Aca bha buinig gach cùis,
Rinn iad tùrn gun amharus,
Bithibh eutrom, &c.

* Or after the siege of Quebec in 1759.

'Mhuintir dh' an suaicheantas fraoch,
'S iad na gaisgich nach 'eil faoin ;
'S mairg a thachradh air na laoich,
'N uair bhitheadh caonnag chath orra.

'N uair a théid sibh sìos do 'n bhlàr,
Le féile, 's le h-osan geàrr ;
Bonaid bhreac an casadh àrd,
Cha 'n fhaod 'ur nàmhaid amharc ruibh.

Sud na gaisgich is feàrr gleus,
Anns a chorag ni iad feum ;
'S ioma fear a dh' innseas sgeul,
Gur treun air cùl claidhe iad.

'S iad sud a' bhuidheann gun uaill,
Dh' fhàs gu beothail, làidir, luath,
'N uair a bheir sibh arm a truaill,
Gu 'n gearrar smuais, a's cnaimhean leibh.

Tha 'ur claidhean guineach, geur,
Mar ealtuin gu sgaiteach beur ;
'S ann leo ghearrar am beum,
Cha 'n éirich fear a luidheas leis.

Bha sibh luath-làmhach 's an strì,
'N uair a ghluaiste sibh le spìd,
Rinn sibh buanach anns gach tìr,
Gu 'n togte cìs gach latha leibh.

'S lìonar uasal, àluinn, òg,
Dh' fhalbh, 's a ghluais do 'n chinne mhòr ;
'S ge nach tig iad uile beò,
Bu mhòr an rath chatha bh' ac'.

Tha sibh sìobhalt' ann an tlachd,
Tha sibh aoidheil, tha sibh ceart,
Tha sibh rìoghail, tha sibh pailt,
'An cruadhas, 'an neart, 'an spraicealachd.

Tha sibh socrach, tha sibh luath,
Tha sibh iochdar, gun ghruaim,
Tha sibh curanta, cruaidh,
Tha sibh duaismhor, foighidneach.

O fhuair sibh aodach a's airm—
O fhuair sibh le onair gairm,
Na leigibh le h-aon diu meirg,
Ach deanaibhs' mathasach.

"Cumha Do Rob. Ruadh Mac Ghillebhra, Fear Srath-Ghlas a Thuit 'an Cuilodair."

Le Bhean Fein.

1st stanza :—

Och ! a Thearlaich òig Steùairt'
'S e do chùis rinn mo léireadh,
Thug thu uam gach ni bh' agam.
Ann an cogadh 'nad aobhar ;
Cha chrodh, a's cha chàirdean,
'Rinn mo chràdh—ach mo chéile ;
O'n là dh' fhàg e mi 'm aonar,
Gun sìon 's an t-saoghal ach léine
Mo rùn geal òg.

It extends to 88 lines, or 11 verses of 8 lines in each. The last stanza contains the following :—

'S ioma bean tha brònach,
Eadar Troternis a's Sléibhte,
Agus té tha 'na bantraich,
Nach d'fhuair samhla de 'm chéile.

This reference to Skye is rather gratifying, considering that neither MacDonald of the Isles nor MacLeod of MacLeod joined the Stewart cause.

"Corag Bhrain a's a' choin duibh."

1st Stanza.

Air bhith dhuinn là 'sa bheinn sheilg,
B' ainmic leinn bhi gun choin,
Ag éisdeach ri gàirich Ian,
Ri bùirich fhiadh, agus lòn.

Nineteen verses of four lines in each verse.

"Cumha Shir Iain Chameroin an Fhaisaifhearn," le Donull Camron—Air fonn, "Martuinn a' Bhealaich."

A long and very good song of 18 verses of 8 lines in each, 144 lines in all.

"Cumha do Chaiptein Eòghan Camron, Chuilcheana, a mharbhadh 's a' bhliana 1810, aig Almeida, am Portugal." Le Donull Camron.

This song is also without a chorus ; but the last line of each verse is repeated, a common enough arrangement in Gaelic songs. It extends to 100 lines. There are also some songs by Iain Lom and other bards, and one by "Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh" (a "Marbhrann do dh' fhear na Comraich") in Ronald MacDonald's collection, which altogether makes it a very interesting work, and especially so since it is so scarce. No doubt most of those songs will die out entirely, and my object in mentioning them is to preserve at least their titles and choruses.

I am informed by the Rev. D. MacLean, Duirinish, Skye—one of the best living authorities on Celtic Bibliography—that there are only five copies of Ronald MacDonald's song book in existence, and two copies only of his hymns. The title of the hymn book is as follows :—

"LAOIDHEAN Spioradail, le Raoghall Donullach, an Ardnis, Arisaig, Siorruichd Inbhirniss. Maille ri co-chruinneachadh LAOIDHEAN SPIORADAIL, le Ughdairean Eugsamhuil Inbhirnis ! Dealbh-bhuailt le Seumas Friseal. 1821."—12mo 2 ff=p.p. 28.

Mr MacLean remarks that very few Gaelic scholars are aware that the district of Arisaig produced, this poet who published the above two volumes of poetry. The two works are so rare that they escaped the notice of John Reid and his coadjutors when writing that useful work, "Bibliotheca Scoto Celtica," published in 1832. From the tone and subject of the hymns composed by the author himself, it would appear that he was an elderly man at the time of their composition, and in all likelihood they were composed when the gay muse ceased to charm him. Our author was a poet of no mean power, perhaps not

quite fit to be assigned a first rate rank among our Gaelic poets, but he certainly deserves a place of honour among the MacDonald bards. Various topics engaged his attention. We find in his printed volume panegyrics, satires, elegies, and facetious pieces, also congratulatory and descriptive poems. Mr MacLean admires the beautiful and idiomatic Gaelic in which he composed —the Gaelic of the Morar district, so rich in every page in felicitous turns of expression. Altogether he commends the work as much to the perusal of the lexicographer and grammarian as to the lover of lyric poetry. Our author appears at his best in some of his satires. Everybody who knows anything of the venerable language of Albin, knows that it is unequalled in vituperative power. No one knew this better than the premier poet, Alexander MacDonald, when speaking in praise of the language, he said—

'S i 'n aon chànain
Am beul nam bàrd 's nan éisg,
Is fheàrr gu càineadh,
Bho linn Bhàbeil féin.

Succeeding poets found the truth of this for themselves. The occasion that gave rise to the satirical song—"Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich," was as follows :—A boat's crew, among them our bard, were stormstayed on the Island of Canna, one of the inner Hebrides. They were most inhospitably received by the Islanders—a very uncommon thing in the Highlands—and were refused shelter, and had sold to them at famine prices, it is said, the remains of a lean cow that died of starvation. This, of course, roused the poet's wrath and he recorded it. We shall be happy to hear more of this clan poet ; there must be traditions of him still lingering in the districts of Arisaig and Morar. That a poet of the ability of our author was so far forgotten and unheard of, is surprising.

Oran rinneadh ann an Canai air do'n ughdair bhi ri port, 's e an droch chairtealan. Air seisd,

Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich,
'S fhada am port a th'air breith oirnn.

'S fhada mi ri port an Canai,
A bhiadh air blianaich 's air drama,
Ged' rachainn a chainnt ri caraid,
Cha'n fhaigh mi bainne ri òl.

'S fhada tha mi 'san tìr spìocaich :
Ge daor a phaigh sinn a' bhlianach,
Bha blas lobhte oirre——cha b'fhiach i,
Cha chumadh i Criosduidh beò.

'Sann o bhràthair Iain 'ic Artair,
Fhuair sinn blianaich na bà glaise,
An car a bha riabh ann ad chasan
Cha toirear asd' an òrd e.

'S ann o chliamhain Iain 'ic Fhiunlaidh,
'Fhuair sinn blianach na bà crùbaich,
'S fhaide leam na paigheadh dùbailt',
Ma chuireas i 'n crùban oirnn.

Fhir mhòir rnaidh, nach d'fhuair am pailteas,
Cha do sheall thu d'leabhar ceartais ;
B' fhearr dhuit buidheachas Chlann Lachuinn,
No sgillinn Shasnach do'n chòrr.

Chaidh mi oiche m' aoidh dhachaidh
Gu Gilleasbuig dubh Mac-Artair ;
Ged bha mi fliuch 'am chaiseart.
Dh' ialaidh mi mach gu bhi beò.

Sgaoil e lamhan air gach taobh dha,
Cumail aige 'chuid an t-saoghal !
Chaill e combanas nan daoine,
Leis a' ghaol a thug e 'n òr.

Thàinig mi dhachaidh gu tùrlach,
Tigh dubh nach glainte o'n dùdan ;
Chunna mi bean air do chùlaobh
Bu choltach ri muige ròin.

Do shròin cho biorach ri faochaig,
Casadh innte mach ri t-aodunn.
Ghearradh i cuileann a's caorann,
Leis an fhaobhar 'tha gun fheòil,

Chaidh mi mach, a's rinn mi ùrnaigh,
An Ti g'am ghreasad as an dùthaich ;
Pàirt do shoirbheas garbh na dùltachd
Bhi 'ga ghiùlan anns an t-seòl.
Teann, teann, teann a bhodaich, &c.

Mr MacLean further informs me that he has got the only copy in existence of Donald MacDonald's—Am Bàrd Conanach's—prospectus of his intended song book published in 1814. It gives the song on Buonaparte in a very different way from the form in which it appeared in subsequent publications.

There was also a John MacDonald, a Gaelic School teacher, who published a volume of religious poems in Inverness in 1802. He was a most vigorous and energetic poet, with very good conceptions. His book is now excessively rare. There was another Gaelic School teacher of the name of Robert MacDonald, Inverness, who published a volume of hymns in 1836, and a Rev. Donald MacDonald, one of the secession ministers, who published poems in Glasgow in 1857, and a Rev. Donald MacDonald, a minister in Canada, who published a volume of religious hymns in 1858, and republished in 1870 in Charlottetown.

For all these names I am indebted to the Rev. Mr MacLean, of Duirinish. Inverness I consider an old fossil—no information to be had there. Some person of distinction, unfortunately, once remarked that the Invernesians spoke the purest English. Since then the people have become so conceited that their patriotism has gone down into their boots.

RAONAILD NIGHEAN MHIC NEIL.

(RACHEL, DAUGHTER OF THE SON OF NEIL).

Rachel MacDonald, a native of North Uist, was a distinguished poetess in her day. She flourished towards the end of the last century. The only song of hers which has been preserved is "Oran fir Heiskir," composed to young MacLean of Heiskir, under the following circumstances. On one occasion, while storm-stayed in the Isle of Skye and waiting for a boat to take her across the Minch, she went to the shore at Dunvegan along with other women to gather shell-fish. On raising her head and looking westward she saw a tall handsome gentleman pass by. To the astonishment of the rest this gentleman, beautifully dressed, and wearing a gold ring, accosted her, and on finding out that she was waiting to cross over to Uist, offered her a passage. He turned out to be young MacLean of Heiskir, an island known as "Monach," lying westward of North Uist. In praise of "Fear Heiskir," and his Birlinn, or pleasure boat, she composed the following stirring verses* :—

Gur e mis' tha fo mhìghean
'S mi leam féin air a' chnoc.
Fada fada bho m' chàirdean
Ann an àite ri port
Gus a faca mi 'm bàta
Le siùil àrda ri dos
Tigh' nn bho Rudha na h-Airde
'S mac an àrmuinn ri 'stoc.

Mac an àrmuain ri stiùireadh,
A' tigh' nn a dh' ionnsuidh an t-Snoid
Steach troimh chaolas a' beucadh
'S muir ag éirigh ri 'stoc :
Tha do làmhsa cho gleusda,
'S cha do thréig thu do neart
Ged a thigeadh muir dù-ghorm
'Chuireadh srùladh a steach.

Bu tu sgiobair na fairge,
'S tu fear falmadair grinn,
'S tu gu'n deanadh a stiùireadh
'Nuair a dhiùltadh càch i ;
'Nuair a bheireadh iad thairis,
'S iad 'nan luidhe 's an tuim,
Chuireadh tus' i cho gàireach
Gus an tàradh i tìr.

Cha bu ghlas bho'n a' chuan thu,
Cha bu duaichnidh do dhreach,
Ged a dh' éireadh muir tuaireap,
Agus stuadhana cas,
'Bagradh reef oirr' le soirbheas,
Le stoirm 'us droch fhras,
Bha do mhisneach cho làidir,
'S bho do làmhsa cho maith.

Cha robh do leithid ri fhaighinn
Eadar so 's a' Chaoir-dhearg.
Eadar Lìte no Barraidh,
'N dean iad taghal no falbh ;
Cha robh maighistear soithich
'Chuala gliocas do làmh,
Nach bi faighneachd am b' fhiosrach
C' àite 'm faicte do bhàt,

Ged bhiodh cìosnaich mhar' ann,
A bhuaileadh barraibh a crann,
Chuireadh fodh' i gu 'slataibh,
'S luaithe h-astar na long ;
Tha i aotrom aigeannach,
'G éirigh eadar gach gleann,
Muir a' bualadh mu 'darach,
A' fuasgladh reangan 'us lann.

An iùrach àluinn aighcarrach,
'S i ri gabhail a' chuain,
I ruith cho dìreach ri saighead,
'S gaoth 'na h-aghaidh gu cruaidh ;
Ged bhiodh stoirm chlachan-meallainn
Ann's cathadh a tuath,
Nì fear Heisgir a gabhail,
Làmh nach athadh roimh stuaidh,

The song describes the sea and the skill of the commander, but like many of our fine Gaelic songs the air has never, so far as I am aware, been published, and is now difficult to procure. Now is the time to bring all these remnants to light before being lost for ever. There is a good deal to be picked up yet in the Outer Hebrides, and I have no doubt one or two more of Rachel's songs among them. However, should she never have composed any other song but "Oran fir Heiskir," it entitles her to be ranked among our Highland poetesses.

* "Uist Bards," by Rev. A. MacDonald, Kiltarlity.

AILEAN DOMHNULLACH.

(ALLAN MACDONALD.)

Allan MacDonald was born at Allt-an-SrothaiL, in Lochaber, in 1794, and described his pedigree as follows :—He was a son of Alastair Mac-Aonghais, Mhic Alastair Bháin, Mhic Alastair Mhòir, Mhic Aonghais a' Bhochdain, Mhic Aonghais Mhòir, Both-Fhiunntain, Mhic Alastair, Mhic Iain Dubh, Mhic Raonaill Mhòir na Ceapaich. His father was a drover, and lived at Achadh-nan-Coinnichean, in Glenspean. His mother was Mary Campbell, a daughter of Donald, son of black John, who lived at Achadh-a-Mhadaidh, in Glenroy. He was a shepherd with Iain Bàn MacDonell (MacDonald) of Inch. He married Catherine Nic Mhurich, and emigrated to Canada in 1816, lived a while at Cape Breton, and left it in 1847, and went to reside by the river south of Antigonish, where he died in 1868. Having lived some time at Cape Breton,

the Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair picked up a good deal of information from him. He had a great many old Highland songs and stories, and took a great interest in the history and tradition of the Highlands. He was a fine, honest, and truthful man, and an excellent poet. One of his compositions was a beautiful lament for Alastair MacDonald, who was drowned at Merigonish in 1830, the first stanza of which is as follows.* It extends to 66 lines :—

Tha sgeul truagh a's cruaidh ri aithris
Tigh'nn air m' aire an dràsta,
Sgeul a chualas mu na chailleadh,
Alastair a bhàthadh :
Cha b' e 'n sòlas dhuit e' Dhòmhnaill;
Gur h-e leòn 's a chràidh thu,
An corp ciatach 'bu ghlan fiamh
A bhi gun dròn 's an t-sàile.

There are other two Nova Scotia Gaelic poets that may be mentioned in this place. John MacDonald, the hunter, and Alex. MacDonald, a native of Moidart, who lives at Keppoch, Antigonish. The following is the title and a stanza of John MacDonald's song :—

"Oran a rinneadh le Iain Dòmhnallach, an sealgair, mu shia bliadhna an déigh dha tighinn do'n dùthaich so."

Mi 'n so 'am aonar is tric m' smaointinn
Gur h-iomad caochladh tigh'nn air an t-sluagh ;
Cha chòir do dhaoine 'bhi gòrach daonnan,
Ged bhios iad aotrom an dara h-uair.
A ruith an t-saoghail 's gun ann ach faoineis,
E mar a' ghaoth 'bhios ag aomadh uait ;
Le gheallaidh briagach gur beag a's fiach e,
'Nuair théid do thiodhlaiceadh anns an uaigh.

Alexander MacDonald's "Oran molaidh do Mhàiri nighean Alastair Dhach-an-fhasaidh"—song in praise of Mary, daughter of Alexander of Dochanassie—extends to 66 lines, as follows :—

Air dhomh 'bhi 'm aonar
Troimh aonach nam beann,
Gu'n d' ghleus mi na teudan
'S gun té dhuibh air chall.
Gur seinn mar bu mhiann leam
'Chur rian air gach rann,
Do nigh'n duinn a' chuil shnìomhain,
So shìos anns a' ghleann.

'S Ban-Chamshronach chinnteach
An rìbhinn ghlan òg,
Dhe'n fhine cho rìoghail
'S a chinn 'san Roinn-Eòrp' !
Gu'm b' ainmeil 'n an tìm iad
Ri'n inns' anns gach seòl ;
'S math 'sheas iad Sir Eòghann,
Làmh theòm' air cheann slòigh. †

* "Glen Bard Collection," by Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair.

† From MacLean Sinclair's "Gaelic Bards."

I am informed by Professor MacKinnon that an able Gaelic scholar named Gilbert MacDonald, who resided in Edinburgh early in the present century, translated "The Confession of Faith,' and was well known to the late Duncan M'Laren, M.P., who took lessons from him to refresh his Gaelic.

SEUMAS DONULLACH

(JAMES MACDONALD).

This excellent writer of lyric poetry was born in September, 1807, in the parish of Fintry, Stirlingshire. His father was employed at the cotton factory of Culcruich. MacDonald showed early signs of precocity, which attracted the attention of two of his paternal uncles, who were sufficiently well-off to provide James with a liberal education. Having acquired the rudiments of learning at Culcruich, he afterwards studied at the Grammar School of Stirling, and proceeded to the University of Glasgow in 1822, where he intended studying for the ministry of the Established Church, and attended the Divinity Hall for three sessions. The church not being to his taste, he abandoned the study of theology and took to educational pursuits. After teaching in several boarding establishments he became corrector of the press in the printing office of Messrs Blackie of Glasgow. Having suffered in health through close confinement in town, he was induced to accept the appointment of Free Church schoolmaster at Blairgowrie, but he never recovered his health. Continuing to decline he removed to the village of Catrine, in Ayrshire, where he died on the 27th of May, 1848.* He was a devoted teacher of Sabbath Schools, and his only separate publications are two collections of hymns for their use. The following is a specimen of his poetry :—

MARY.

The winter's cauld and cheerless blast
May rob the feckless tree, Mary
And lay the young flowers in the dust,
Where once they bloomed in glee, Mary.
It canna chill my bosom's hopes ;
It canna alter thee, Mary ;
The summer o' thy winsome face
Is aye the same to me, Mary.

The gloom o' life, its cruel strife,
May wear me fast awa', Mary ;
An' leave me like a cauld, cauld corpse,
Among the drifting snaw, Mary.

* From the Rev. Charles Rogers' "Scottish Poets.

Yet 'mid the drift, wert thou but nigh,
I'd fauld my weary e'e, Mary.
And deem the wild and raging storm
A laverock's song o' glee, Mary.

My heart can lie in ruin's dust,
And fortune's winter dree, Mary:
While o'er it shines the diamond gay
That glances frae thine e'e, Mary.
The rending pangs and woes o' life,
The dreary din o' care, Mary.
I'll welcome, gin they lea'e but thee,
My lonely lot to share, Mary.

As o'er yon hill the evening star
Is wilin' day awa', Mary,
Sae sweet and fair art thou to me,
At life's sad gloamin' fa, Mary;
It gars me greet wi' vera joy,
When'er I think on thee, Mary,
That sic a heart sae true as thine,
Should e'er ha'e cared for me, Mary.

Other poems by the same author are—"Bonnie Aggie Lang" (30 lines), and "The Pride o' the Glen" (40 lines), both indicating a certain amount of poetic talent. Had our poet only lived longer, he would, doubtless, have produced many poems.

DAVID MACDONALD, INVERNESS.

Sixty-one years ago, in July, 1838, David MacDonald published a book of poems and songs at Inverness, which is now very scarce, entitled "The Mountain Heath," dedicated to MacIntosh of MacIntosh, chief of Clan Chattan, embracing 37 poems, and 18 songs in English, and 2 songs in Gaelic.

From remarks in several of the poems he evidently resided in London. There is no clue in the work as to what particular part of the country he belonged, or anything regarding his parentage, but from his frequent references to Inverness I presume he belonged to Inverness* or its vicinity, and that he was in a manner a disappointed man.

The work opens with "The Goddess Scotia†" in which the following lines occur:—

When fancy dictates to poetic mind,
The soul sustains the first impressive part—
Hence is the bard to solitude inclined,
To breathe the feelings of the pregnant heart,
And soothe the sting of poverty's keen dart.

Perhaps it is to meditate on love,
Which from his station meets but with disdain;
No selfish interest his spirits move,
Oft times the wrongs of others give him pain,
The equal rights of man he will maintain.

His wounded spirit oft is wont to swell,
'Gainst fools, who treat their fellows with contempt,
And do assert that all must go to hell,
From which the knaves themselves will be exempt,
They've tamed the snake which did in Eden tempt.

The poem extends to 51 stanzas or 255 lines, and shows considerable acquaintance with the poets and heroes of Scottish history. At the 33rd stanza he skilfully brings in the following lines to the air of "Ho ro nighean 'chinn duinn àluinn."

O! silent is the harp of Ossian,
Ossian, son of mighty Fingal,
Silent is the harp of Ossian,—
Ossian's harp no more shall jingle.

The song consists of 4 verses and after the next stanza of the poem there are other 4 verses of a song to the air of "Of a' the airts the win' can blaw."

The next poem is an "Answer to a poem by 'Sam Snooks,' wherein he ridicules the Highlanders," in which he begins:—

Proud crested land of mountains, wild and waste,
Of woodland, lake, and cultivated glen,
Of heather, pine, and landscape scenes the best,
Of sweetest women, and of finest men,
Birth-place of heroes, patriots, valiant true,
Whose free born souls did Roman pride rebuke
Norsemen and Danes, full sorely made they rue—
The yoke of Saxons never would they brook,
But made them tremble when they arms uptook."

Then he goes into the history of Scottish prowess in war, mentioning especially the Highlanders in the wars of the last century, and up to Waterloo. His address to Lochness begins—

Hail Queen of lakes! whose beauteous bosom charms
The eyes of all who view thy clear expanse,
Where hither from their ocean-bed in swarms,
The salmon, love-sick for thy waters, dance.

Other poems of more or less merit are "Golden age at Inverness," "On visiting my native land," "The Ravens Rock," "The Invernessian Lasses" (humorous), "To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland," "The Pang—Farewell," "The Castle of Inverness," consisting of 110 verses, or 440 lines, beginning—

On yon green hill by Nessia's banks,
The ancient castle stood,
Where Duncan, King of Albin's land,
Was murdered in cool blood.

From whence th' immortal Shakespeare drew
That bloody scene of death,

---

* See Mr William MacKenzie's description of this bard in the *Highland News* of Oct. 21st, 1899.

† Dedicated to the Gaelic Society —— of London.

With all the guilty terrors which
Was pourtrayed in Macbeth.

Where lovely Mary, Queen of Scots,
Once sought a safe retreat,
Denied admittance, who was forc'd
To lodge in open street.

Another long poem of 119 verses on "The origin, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Sam Snooks" in which he is very severely handled indeed, as will be seen by the opening stanza:—

In some detested heathen spot,
'Twixt H—ll and Aberdeen,
Was born the imlastic puppy, Snooks,
Of most infernal kin.

There are also several poems to private individuals. Of the songs "The Battle of Blàr Léine," to the air of "Johnny Cope," is rather good; so is "The old Highlander," to the air of "A famous Man was Robin Hood"; "Bonnie Fanny," to the air of "Monymusk"; "Cambri Jean," to the air of "Ho mo Mhàiri Laghach"; "Nymph of the Forest," to the air of "Màiri Bhàn Og"; "Bonnie Annie," to the air of "Maid of Islay"; and several others. Of the two Gaelic songs "Blàr Allt a' Bhonnaich,"* to the air of "John of Badenyon," is the best. It begins:—

1 Bha Sasnaich bho linn nan clann
Le barail fhaoin aig earbsa,
Gu'n sàradh iad le treunas làmh,
Fo chìs dhaibh rìoghachd Alba;
Ach 's fasa ni a rùnachadh,
Na cùis a chur 'an gnìomh dhuinn—
'S b' ionann dhoibhsan dh' aindeoin dùrachd,
Bha gach ionnsuidh dìomhain

5 Aig Allt-a' Bhonnaich thachair sliochd
Na Sasunn a's na h-Alba;
'San òrdugh cath gu'n deachaidh iad
Gu'n treunatus a dhearbhadh;
Deich mìle fichead Albanach,
'S 'm breacanan mu'n guaillibh;
Ciad 's lath-chiad mìle Sasunnach,
'S gu'n d' fhàg am meatachd fuar iad.

6 Bho thìr an Eilein Sgiathanach,
Bho Uist agus Cnoideart,
'S bho Ghleannagaraidh morbheinneach,
Nam fiadh, nan earb, 's nan ruadh dhamh;
Bho 'n Cheapaich is bho Bharasdail,
'S bho frìthibh Gleanna-Comhainn,
Le crannaibh-tàraidh siùbhlanach,
Ghrad chruinnich neart Chlann Dòmhnuill.

14 'Nuair theann na bàird ri brosnachadh,
'S na pìobairean ri séideadh,
Chuir sgeulachd 's ceòl an sinnsridh,
Na Gàidheal air lon ghleusadh:
Le 'n lannan mòra, suas gu còmhrag,
Ghluais na seòid, 's cha b' iognadh,
A ghearradh feòil nan daoine beò,
'S air creubhag cha robh caomhnadh.

15 Fuil Shasunn ruith 'na caochannan,
'S na Gàidheil sìor 'ga dòirteadh;
'S air son gach dochuinn 'dh' fhuiling Alb'
Thug Allt-a' Bhonnaich tòireachd;
Bha glaic an uillt lom làn de chuirp,
Mar chruachan a 'm blàr-mòintich,
Is caolanan a 'm bronnaichean,
A' brùchdadh mach troimh 'n còmhdach.

18 'Se Dia nan dùl 'rinn cuideachadh
Le luchd nam breacan féilidh;
'S cha mhòr a thuit dhiubh anns a' bhlàr,
Is na bha beò cha ghéilleadh;
Sud mar chroìchnaich an cath,
'Nis cuircam chrìoch air m' òran—
Mu'n a' bhlàr bha 'n Allt-a' Bhonnaich,
'S ioma corp bha fuar ann!

The clans are also well described in the song, which keeps the war-like spirit up to the end. The other Gaelic song is a "Marbhrann"—elegy—for Alexander MacGillivray, to the air of "Highland Mary," consisting of five stanzas in the usual melancholy strain, and couched in appropriate language.

In the 6th stanza of the poem, or song, on the battle of Bannockburn, fought in 1314, it relates that there were present men from Skye, Uist, and Knoydart, from Glengarry of the high mountains of the deer and roe, from Keppoch, Barasdail, and the wilds of Glencoe, and that the enemy felt the strength of the Clan Donald. In the 14th stanza it says that when the bards began to encourage the clans, the pipers began to blow their pipes—these were probably the horns mentioned by some historians that were blown. If this was the first time that Lowlanders had heard the pipes in battle, they might readily have been mistaken for horns, as they probably would only have two drones, or perhaps only one.*

I have frequently seen it mentioned that by the historians who detailed the battle of Harlaw, fought in 1411, no mention is made of the bagpipes. We know that Lachlan Mòr Mac Mhurich delivered his famous harangue on that occasion to remind the MacDonalds of their hardihood in the hour of battle, but the pipes were also played. I find in the Rev. James MacKenzie's History of Scotland the following passage:—"A fierce Chieftain, Donald, Lord of the Isles, thought he had a claim to the Earldom of Ross. The Earl of Buchan claimed it too, Donald raised an army of 10,000 men, and almost the first tidings which the governor (Duke of Albany) heard of him was, that the fires of the Highland army were blazing in the heart of Ross. The Lord of the Isles was met at Dingwall by a force of the Earl of Buchan's men; but this little army after a fierce struggle was almost entirely cut to pieces.

* The battle of Bannockburn.

* In an old print of the time of James the IV., A.D. 1513, the piper has only one drone.

Donald swept onward, spreading havoc before him. He over-ran the fertile province of Moray, advanced through Strathbogie, and from thence broke into the district of the Garioch, threatening to make Scotland a desert to the shores of the Tay. The Garioch belonged to the Earl of Mar, a warrior of determined spirit and great experience. Enraged at the havoc made on his territory. Mar got together a force. The burgesses of Aberdeen took down their swords, put on their steel caps, unfurled the banner of the city, and with the Provost at their head, marched with the Earl of Mar. The two armies encountered each other at the village of Harlaw, near the place where the water of Ury falls into the Don. *With piobrochs deafening* to hear, the Highland host came down." We know also that the pipes were played at the first battle of Inverlochy in A.D. 1431, and that a piobroch was composed on the occasion. Besides being at Bannockburn, I find that in A.D. 1390, during the reign of Robert III., the king and a great assemblage of nobles witnessed the combat between the clan Chattan and the clan Kay at the "Inch" of Perth, where sixty Highlanders—thirty from each clan—settled an old dispute by the judgment of battle, and on that occasion each clan "stalked into the barriers to the sound of their great war-pipes." These facts should settle the question as to the ancient custom of playing the bagpipes in battle.

There can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the bagpipes; it was well-known among the Arabians, and has been found sculptured at Nineveh. It was also known in Babylon "The Assyrians took it to India, whilst there is great probability of its having been played in the Temple service at Jerusalem. It was used in this country after the Roman conquest, if not earlier, and Procopius, A.D., 500, informs us that it was classed as an instrument of war by the Roman infantry. So in all probability it was used in this country centuries before the battle of Bannockburn.

IAIN MAC DHOMHNUILL.

(JOHN MACDONALD.)

I am indebted to the late Mr Archibald Sinclair, Glasgow, the editor of "An t-Oranaiche," for the following notes regarding the subject of this sketch, viz. :—John MacDonald, a native of Mull, who resided some time in Lorne, as indicated in the first verse of his song "Cha mhòr nach coma leam cogadh no sìth." He was a bard of considerable repute, and composed some excellent songs. He is said to have died about 50 years ago. It seems that he acted as a sort of general and handy-man among farmers, and undertook some veterinary surgeon's work in connection with stock, which necessitated his moving a good deal about the country. These intelligent handy-men have always been a great acquisition to farmers, and breeders of stock, and no doubt our bard had a considerable reputation as an empirical veterinary surgeon, as such an occupation required more skill and judgment than most shepherds and herds possessed. To one courting the muses, coming in contact with so many people of different classes and temperaments, must also have sharpened his powers of observation, and conduced to increasing that poetic inspiration of which he was undoubtedly possessed.

The first of his songs is at page 244 of the "Oranaiche," and entitled "Oran Le Iain Mac Dhòmhnuill ann an Eilein Mhuile," air fonn, "O nach robh sinn mar bha."

Chorus.

O, cha'n urrainn mi ann,
Gu dé mar is urrainn mi ann?
Cha'n urrainn mi dìreadh a' mhullaich
Bho'n dh' fhàs sinn uile cho fann.

Ma thig na Russianaich thairis,
Mar tha iad a' bagairt 's an àm,
Cò a thilleas iad dhachaidh,
'S na gaisgich againn' air chall?
'S iad gu'n seasadh an làrach,
'S nach bitheadh gun à·ach an call,
'S mur strìochdadh na nàimhdean dhoibh toileach,
Gu'm bitheadh an colunn gun cheann.
O, cha'n urrainn, &c.

Na Gàidheil fhuranach, ghleusda,
'S an gunn' air deadh ghleusadh 'n an làimh,
Bheireadh an coileach bhar gheugan,
'S a leagadh mac-éilde 'n a dheann:
Mar sud a's luchd-breacan an fhéilidh,
Chìte air sléibhte nam beann;
Ach clobairean glasa nan aomadh,
'S beag orr' na daoin' a bhios ann!
O, cha'n urrainn, &c.

This patriotic song was probably composed during the Russian war (Crimean war), as the first line says:—If the Russians come over, who will send them home again, as our heroes are lost?

His next song, "Cha Mhòr nach coma leam cogadh no sìth," is, at page 290, of the "Oranaiche." The chorus of it is:—

Fal o, hal dal o hog i o ho ro ì,
Fal o, hal dal o hog i o ho ro ì,
Hithil ù hillin o, agus ho, ho ro hì,
Cha mhòr nach coma leam cogadh no sìth.

Tha mi'n so bho chionn tamail 's mi'n Lathurna fuar,
'S cha choinnich mi caraid 'nì labhairt rium suairc',
'S tha mo dhùil ri dol thairis gach là agus uair,
Do Mhuile nam beannan, 's nan gleannanaibh uain'.
Fal o. etc.

Thoir mo shoraidh le dùrachd gu dùthaich mo ghaoil,
Far am bitheadh a' tathaich na h-aighean 's na laoigh;
Gach lusan a's flùr ann fo dhriùchd air an raon,
'S bi' dh cnothan a's ùbhlan a' lùbadh nan craobh.

Then after half-a-dozen more verses in praise of Mull, and e erything in it, comes the following significent one :—

'Nuair dh' éireadh Cloinn Dòmhnuill, 's i 'n dòigh bh' aca riamh',
'Bhi seasamh na còrach, luchd leònadh nam fiadh,
'Dol an toiseach a' chatha, le claidheamh a's sgiath,
'S gu'n deanadh iad pronnadh mu'n cromadh a' ghrian.

It is to be regretted that more of this bard's poetry had not been preserved as he was evidently capable of producing even more excellent songs than the stanzas of those quoted.

REV. ANGUS MACDONALD, BARRA.

In Dr. George Henderson's excellent work "Leabhar Nan Gleann"—the book of the glens—published last year (1898), I find several very good songs and elegies by the late Father Angus MacDonald, of Barra, who died at Rome in 1833, as Rector of the Scotch College there. He was of the Mac-'Ic-Ailein (Clan Ronald) family, and was born in the island of Eigg. "Laoidh a' Phurgadair" is said to have been composed by him, and afterwards printed in Father Allan MacDonald's "Comh-chruinneachadh de Laoidhean Spioradail," published by Hugh MacDonald, Oban, in 1893.

One of his songs is entitled "Oran Le Aonghus Dònullach, Sagairt 'am Barraidh, 'nuair a bha lionnadh (leannachadh) air 's a chaidh a leigheas leis an Dotair Leòdach." It is a poem of 80 lines; I quote the first and last verses of it, but I have no idea to what air it was sung. It gives a description of an illness—an abscess he had, and which was cured by a Doctor MacLeod.

1 Dà mhios dheug agus ràthaich
Bho'n thàrmaich an cnap
A fhuair mise fo m' mheòirean
Ann an còs air an asnaidh;
Ged a bha e gun chràdh
Gu'n robh e fàs mar an rainich,
'S cha' n 'eil fhios ciod e'n t-aobhar
'Chuir mo thaobhs' air an alt sin.

10 'S gu' m b'dhiubh sin a bha'n Leòdach,
Gu'n d' fhuair e fòghlum 'us aithne,
Gu'n robh 'làimhe air a dhearbhadh,
'Us 'ainm anns gach fearann,
Gu'n d' rinn e'n t-saothair ud cinnteach,
Gur fad a bhios mi 'n am an-fhiach
Mur dian mi g' ad phàigheadh,
Guidheam gràsan dha t' anam.

There is also a song by him to MacNeill of Barra, during the Napoleonic wars. It extends to 48 lines, and speaks of his prowess in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, as will be seen from the following stanzas :—

'S thàin naigheachd gu'r n-ionnsuidh
'Dh' fhàg sinn uile fo chùram 'san àm,
Mu thighearna na dùthcha
'Bhi 'n Cath Waterloo 's bu mhòr call,
Far robh suinn na Roinn-Eòrpa
'N déigh tarruinn an òrdan gu strì,
Is lionar curaidh a leònadh
Agus mìlidh gun deò a dh' fhan shìos.

Chaidh tu a rioghachd na Spàinte
Far robh neart aig an nàmhaid gu leòir,
A h-uile latha bha blàr ann
Fhuair thu 'n urram ged bha thu ro òg,
Dhearbh thu spionnadh a' Ghàidheil
Claidheamh-mòr de chruaidh stàilinn 'n ad dhòrn.

He also composed a "Cumha do choirneil Mac Neill"—Lament for Colonel MacNeil—of 112 lines, a very good song, and another shorter poem wishing MacNeil back in his own country, the last stanza of which runs :—

Tha leam dul air a chunntais.
Is ceann fin' thu le cliù thar Cloinn Nèill,
Is iad 'nan treubh anns an dùthaich,
'S nach 'eil fios cò'n taobh as an tìr,
Treubh 'tha fialaidh mu'n chuinneadh,
Treubh 'bha macanta mùirnte 's gach ni,
Treubh iriseal cliùteach
A sheasadh gun tionndadh an Righ.

"Turus Nèill a' Mhionnlaidh" is in a more humorous vein regarding a certain Neil who had returned from the south and found the people busy at harvest work, and his wife and children without food and peats; to the air of "Och och mar tha mi."

'Us mi 'n am aonar
Dol romh na caoil far
An robh mi eòlach.

All these songs are in Dr. George Henderson's work; and a good deal of other original matter.

MAIRI NIGHEAN IAIN BHAIN

(MARY, DAUGHTER OF FAIR JOHN).

Mary MacDonald (Mrs MacPherson), the Skye poetess, was born on the 10th of March, 1821, at Skeabost, in the Isle of Skye. Her father was a small farmer at Skeabost, and was known as "Iain Bàn Mac Aonghais Oig,"—John Bane, son of young Angus. Her mothers name was Flora MacInnes, daughter of Neil MacInnes, crofter in Uig, Snizort.

In Mr MacBain's excellent summary of her life, published with her book of poems in 1891, a very interesting sketch is given of the poetess's career. It seems that the first twelve years of her parents' married life were spent in Glasgow, "where they settled on their refusal with many other Skye people to proceed to some bogus settlements exploited for them in Canada." The poetess and one brother were the only members of the family who were born at Skeabost, after the return of their parents to Skye, so that to all intents and purposes she is a true native of "Eilean a' cheò," the famous isle of mist. Her youth and early womanhood were spent in her native place, where she learned all the complex and necessary routine of a rural life, and house-keeping, etc., necessitating a knowledge of out-door work as well; tending cattle, spinning, cloth-making, and various other functions, amongst which she did not forget to store her mind with the lays and lyrics of her native isle. Whether her lays in the misty isle were romantic or not we do not know, but she left Skye in 1848 to get married to Isaac MacPherson, a shoemaker at Inverness, whose parents belonged to Skye. After a happy married life of nearly a quarter of a century, her husband died in 1871, leaving her with a family of four children dependent upon her small resources. Being, however, a woman of conrage and ability, she set to work in earnest and left Inverness for Glasgow the following year, where she entered the Royal Infirmary with a view to becoming a trained nurse. She remained at the Infirmary for five years, and ultimately obtamed a nurse's certificate both for general and obstetric nursing, and afterwards practised in Greenock and Glasgow for some years, and returned to Skeabost in 1882, where the laird placed at her disposal a cottage—"Woodside"—rent free for life. Strange to say that her poetic talent, of which she was herself unconscious, lay dormant during her youth and married life, but when the occasion arose she burst forth into song, which supports the writer's theory that there are many Burnses in the land when any great political excitement or any other cause that specially touches the hearts of the people arises; there is no lack of faculty in the masses, and especially amongst Highlanders.

A miscarriage of justice which our poetess suffered in 1872 did not bring her to her knees suing for mercy. On the contrary, it brought her to her feet, and she soon showed how firmly she could stand upon them, and of what stuff she was made. Being possessed of a great command of language, Mary could launch forth as few can, and if there were any weak points about her adversary, she soon scored a "bull's-eye." Her powers as a poetess first became prominent during the contested election of the Inverness Burghs in 1874, when she composed several songs in favour of Mr Charles Fraser MacIntosh. who won the contest. She also took a very active part in the Highland land law reform, and the crofters agitation, and it is said that the success of the agitation was materially assisted by her songs. It is too early to give an opinion as to what position she will hold among our Highland bards; but I have no doubt her work will be more highly estimated a generation hence than it is even at the present day. I consider her "Eilean a' cheò," and her lament for the late Professor Blackie, very fine productions. Our poetess was possessed of a most wonderful memory. In 1891 she published a volume of poems and songs extending to 320 pages, embracing about 90 pieces of different lengths; and since then she has composed several more which will now probably exceed 100. When Messrs Alexander MacBain and John Whyte were preparing her work for the press, she repeated 9000 lines of poetry from memory, a most remarkable feat; and Mr MacBain reckoned that she must have been able to repeat of her own and other Skye bards' poetry, some 30,000 lines, 12,000 of her own, and 18,000 of others. She was also in possession of a great many old airs that I am afraid will die out since they have not been collected and noted down. Mary, though comparatively uneducated, except what she did for

herself in the way of being able to read Gaelic, exhibited great command of language, and in many of her songs there are very fine passages, and all her elegies are both touching and good. Her wonderful memory at her age was one of the best signs of her vitality, and though very remarkable, it was nothing uncommon for Highlanders, especially in the past, to be able to recite long poems that would astonish a modern "Dominie." Captain John MacDonald of Thurso, formerly of Breaknish, Isle of Skye, who furnished James MacPherson with some of his Ossianic poems, declared at the age of seventy-eight, on the 12th of March, 1805, that when a boy of twelve or fifteen, he could repeat from one to two hundred poems which he learned from an old man of about eighty, who used to sing them to his father at night when he went to bed in spring, and in winter before he got up.

Neil Mac Mhuireach repeated to the Rev. Mr MacNeill the whole of the poem of "Clan Usnach," called by MacPherson "Darthula," and Malcolm MacPherson, Portree, Isle of Skye, son of Dugald MacPherson, who had been a tenant at a village in Trotternish, and an eminent bard, declared on oath before two Justices of the Peace, that his brother, who died in 1780, recited Gaelic poems for four days and four nights to MacPherson. Mr MacBain, who is himself an excellent Gaelic scholar, says of Màiri Nighean Iain Bhàin's poetry, that it is a "well of pure Gaelic undefiled," and that is the best compliment which can be bestowed upon it, coming from such an authority as Mr MacBain, and it is fortunate for her fame, and for Gaelic literature, that she should have lived under the protection and patronage of the generous laird of Skeabost. She composed and sang up to the very last, and a tremendous fund of old stories and songs, that are now lost for ever, she had. She took ill at Portree in November, 1898, and died there after a short illness at the ripe age of seventy-eight years. She will be much missed by the present generation of Skye people, both in this country and in the colonies.

Subjoined are some stanzas of two of her latest productions :—

LAMENT FOR MRS ALEX. MACDONALD,

NATIONAL BANK HOUSE PORTREE, SKYE,

Who died in Edinburgh on the 28th April, 1897.

Och mo léiridh ! 's cha mhi 'n am aonar,
Tha ceudan brònach an deaghaidh bàs
Na baintighearn' òirdheirc 'bha rianail stòlda,
Gun mhoit, gun mhòr-chuis no sgleò gun stàth ;
Buadhan nàdurra, b'fhurasda àireamh,
Bha seirc 's bàigh, agus gràdh is sìth,
'N a cridhe tìorail 's a lamh cho fialaidh,
'S gu'n d' dhearbh a gnìomh nach robh ciall 'ga dìth.

Dhearbh a gnìomh e do'n Eilean Sgiathach,
Am feadh 's a riaghaileas a' ghrian 's na neòil,
'S tràghadh 's lìonadh mu chuairt d'a chrìochan,
Bidh t' ainm 's t' fhiach 'g a chur sìos 'an clò :
Bidh linn nach d' thàinig a' cumail faire
Air t' onoir àrd, agus gràdh 'n an cridh',
'N àm roinn na dìleib do shliochd, 's an sinnsear,
A chuir thu sìos dhaoibh roimh chrìoch do thìm.

Cha'n ann air thuaireim 'tha sinne luaidh ort,
Ged tha sinn gruamach air son do bhàis ;
Tha thusa aig suimhneas, taobh thall gach truaighe,
'S sealbh na duais air son gnìomh do làmh :
'S ioma dìlleachdan 's creatair dìblidh,
Do'n d'rinn thu dìdein 'n an tìnn 's 'n am feum,
Nach cuala cluas bho do bhilean suairce,
Na chuireadh gruaman air neach fo'n ghréin.

'S mòr a' bhearn a thuit 's an àite,
'N là chàradh do dhus 's a' chill,
'S an Eilean àghmhor 's an d'fhuair thu t' àrach,
'S an robh do chàirdean ré iomadh linn :
Cha b'ann de chrìonach a dh'fhaodadh spìonadh,
Fo roid a leamhsgaradh air gach làimh,
Ach duilleich chaomh de smior nan Leòideach
Fo dhìon Chlann-Dòmhnuill, am pòr gun mheang.

ORAN DO THEAGHLACH SCIABOST.

LE MAIRI NIGHEAN IAN BHAIN.

Seisd—Soraidh leis an òigridh
A sheòl an cuan,
Uaislean tìorail, stòlda,
Gun phròis gun uaill,
Soraidh leis an òigridh
A sheòl an cuan.

Cha'n ioghnadh ged a thàrmaich,
Tioralachd 'nan nadur,
Clann an athar bhàigheil,
Nach gabh cas air tuath.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Saoil nach sona 'mhàthair
A shaothraich na h-àrmuinn
Tha 'nan cliù do'n àite
'N deach an àrach suas.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Maille ris gach fortan,
Nach dean tìm a chosgaidh

Tha ùrnuigh nam bochdan,
Do 'n a nochd i truas.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Tha onair na tuath-cheatharn,
Islean agus uaislean,
Air an snìomh 'n an duail,
Mu'n cuairt duibh fad 'ur ré.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Soraidh ieis na h-àrmuinn,
Coinneach agus Ràal.
'S beannachdan gun àireamh
Gu Tearlach bho'n t-sluagh.
Soraidh leis an óigridh, etc.

Gu robh maise nàduir
Oirbh bho thùs 'ur làithean,
'Chuidich le 'ur tàlantan
'Nuair a dh' fhàs sibh suas.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Tha 'ur buadhan òirdhearc,
Measgaichte le tròcair,
'S cha dean briathran beòil
An cuir an clò gu'n luaidh.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Soraidh leis an ainnir,
'S caoimhneile sealladh ;
Dh'fhalbh i leis na gallain,
Nach fannaich am fuachd.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

Dh' fhalbh thu le do bhràithrean,
C' àite 'm faicte an àicheadh ?
A' seasaidh air blàr do
Ghàidheil an taobh tuath.
Soraidh leis an òigridh, etc.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

George MacDonald, LL.D., poet and novelist, was born at Huntly in Aberdeenshire in 1824, was educated at the parish school there, and at King's College and University of Aberdeen. After taking his degree he became a student for the ministry at the Independent College, Highbury, London, and was for a short time an Independent minister, but soon retired, became a lay member of the Church of England, and settled in London to pursue a literary career. His first work was "Within and Without," a dramatic poem, 1856, with dedicatory sonnet to his wife, dated 1855. This was followed by "Poems," 1857 ; "Phantasies"—a fairy romance —1858 ; "David Elginbrod," 1862 ; "Adela Cathcart," 1864 ; "The Portent story of second sight," 1864 ; "Alec Forbes of Howglen," 1865 ; "Annals of a quiet neighbourhood," 1866 ; "Guild Court," 1867 ; "The Disciple, and other poems," 1868 ; "The Seaboard Parish," 1868 ; "Robert Falconer," 1868 ; "Wilfred Cumbermede," 1871 ; "The Vicar's Daughter," and "Malcolm," 1874 ; "St. George and St. Michael," 1875 ; "Thomas Wingfield, Curate," 1876 ; "The Marquis of Lossie," 1877. Besides these Dr. George MacDonald has written books for the young. "Dealings with the Fairies," 1867 ; "Ranald Bannerman's boyhood," 1869 ; "The Princess and the Goblin," 1871 ; "At the back of the North Wind," 1870, and some others. He is also the author of "Unspoken Sermons," 1866, and a treatise on the "Miracles of our Lord," 1870. In 1877 he received a civil list pension of £100, in consideration of his contributions to literature. His later works are, "The gifts of the child Christ," and other poems, 2 vols., 1882 ; "Castle Warlock," 3 vols., 1882 ; "The Princess and Curdie, a fairy romance," 1882; "Weighed and Wanting," 1882, and "The Wine Woman," a parable, 1883*

For some years past Dr George MacDonald has lived principally at Bordigheri in the south of France. He is at his best in depicting humble Scottish character, and local life. "Robert Falconer" seems to be his most popular work. "The Sangreal" is a poem of much beauty. "A Hidden Life," is also a beautiful poem. It is a story of a Scotch peasant lad who in the intervals of labour on his father's farm studied at College. The Clan Donald may well feel proud of such an eminent author and prolific writer of poetry, song, and romance.

Quotations from some of Dr George MacDonald's "Scotch Songs and Ballads," published at Aberdeen in 1893, consisting of 39 pieces.

Annie, She's Dowie.

Annie she's dowie, and Willie he's wae
What can be the matter wi' siccan a twae—
For Annie she's fair as the first o' the day,
And Willie he's honest and stalwart and gay.

Oh ! the tane has a daddy, is poor and is proud,
And the tither a minnie that cleiks at the goud,
They lo'ed ane anither, and said their say,—
But the daddy and minnie they pairted the twae.

---

* From "Men of the Time."

OWER THE HEDGE.

Bonnie lassie, rosy lassie,
Ken ye what is care?
Had ye ever a thought, lassie,
Made yer hertie sair?

Johnnie said it, Johnnie seekin'
Sicht o' Mally's face—
Keekin' i' the hedge o' holly
For a thinner place.

"Na," said Mally, pawky smilin',
"Nought o' care ken I,
Gien I meet the gruesome carline,
I's haud weel ootby."

. . . . . .

Johnnie turned and left her,
Listed for the war;
In a year cam' limpin'
Hame wi' mony a sear.

. . . . . .

Wha was that sittin'
On the brae sae still?
Worn and wan and alert,
Could it be hersel'?

. . . . . .

Mally's hert played wallop,
Kenned him or he spak':
"Are ye no deid, Johnnie?
Is't yersel come back?

. . . . . .

"Are ye wife or widow?
Tell me in a breath;
To live your lane is fearsome,
Waur nor any death!

"I canna be a widow,
A wife, was never nane,
But noo, gien ye will hae me,
O' wives I will be ane."

His crutch, he flung it frae him;
He thochtna on his harms—
But couldna stan' without it,
And fell in Mally's arms

TIME AND TIDE.

"As I was walking on the strand,
I spied ane auld man sit
On ane auld black roek, and aye the waves
Cam' washin' up its fit.
His lips they gaed as gin they wad lilt,
But o' lintin' wae's me was nane;
He spak an owercome, dreary and dreigh,
A burden whause sang was gane:
'Robbie and Jeannie war two bonnie bairns;
They played thegither i' the gloamin's hush;
Up cam the tide and the mune and the sterns,
And pairted the twa wi' a glint and a gush.'"

"Hoo pairted it them, auld man,?" said I,
"Was't the sea cam up ower strang?
Oh, gien thegither the two o' them gaed,
Their pairtin' wasna lang!
Or was ane ta'en, and the ither left—
Ane tae sing, ane to greit?
It's sair, I ken, to be sae bereft—
But there's the tide at yer feet!"
"Robbie and Jeanie war twa bonnie bairns," etc.,

"Was't the sea o' space wi' its storm o' time
That wadna lat things bide?
But Death's a diver frae heavenly clime,
Seekin' ye 'neath its tide!
And ye'll gaze again in ither's ee,
Far abune space and time?"
Never a word he answered me,
But changed a wee his rime:
"Robbie and Jeanie war twa bonnie bairns,
And they played thegither upo' the shore;
Up cam the tide and the mune and the sterns,
And pairted the twa for evermore."

"May be, auld man, 'twas the tide o' change
That crap atween the twa!
Heeh! that's a droonin' fearsome strange,
Waur, waur nor ane and a'!"
He said nae mair, I lukit, and saw
His lips they couldna' gang!
Death, the diver, had taen him awa',
To gie him a new auld sang.
"Robbie and Jeannie were twa bonnie bairns,
And they played thegither upo' the shore;
Up cam the tide and the mune and the sterns
And souft them baith through a mirksome door!"

THE REV. CHARLES MACDONALD, MOIDART.

Though not a poet the late Father Charles MacDonald,* priest of Moidart, published a very interesting book of 264 pages in 1889, entitled "Moidart," or "Among the Clanranalds." It is divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter describes the "Garbh-chriochan," or "rough-bonnds," a Celtic name which, from time immemorial has been given to a large tract of country in the Western Highlands between Loch Sninart in the south, and Loch Honrn in the north-east. The whole of "the rough bounds" belonged at one time to the MacDonalds. The districts included are Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Arisaig, North and South Morar, and Knoydart. Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, and Knoydart were part of the family inheritance of the Clanranalds. Ardnamurchan was owned by an offshoot of the clan, called the MacIains. For bold and romantic scenery these districts can hardly be surpassed by any thing in Scotland. The principal arms of the sea among them are Loch Suinart,

* The Rev. Charles MacDonald died some seven or eight years ago.

Loch Moidart, Loch-nan-uamh, Loch Aylort, Loch Nevis, and Loch Hourn, and the principal fresh water lakes are Loch Sheil and Loch Morar, the one eighteen and the other sixteen miles long. "The MacIains were extirpated in 1625 by the Campbells, and of the vast estates owned by the Clanranalds only the ruined castle of Eilean Tirrim, and a small uninhabited island called Risèa, remain to the family as sad memorials of their past greatness." In Chapter II. besides a good deal of general historical information, including an invasion by the Danes, it is related that after the death of Somerled Macgillebride, disputes arose between two of his sons—Reginald and Angus. Angus with his three sons perished in Skye in a conflict with the natives of that island, although in the annals of Ulster mention is made not of Angus's but of Reginald's sons as having been present on the occasion :—"Cath tucsat Meic Raghnailt mic Somairligh for feraibh Sciadh du in ra marbhadh an ar" A.D. 1208. "A battle given by the sons of Reginald, son of Somerled, to the men of Skye, who were slain with great slaughter" (translation by Mr Skene). "From Reginald mentioned above, son of Somerled, was descended John of Isla. This chief married his cousin Amie, a daughter of Roderick, one of Bruce's most faithful followers. When the Scottish King had secured the independence of the country, Roderick was confirmed in his title to the estates of Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, and Knoydart, which went at his death to his daughter Amie. By her marriage with John of Isla, Amie had several sons, to one of whom, Reginald, the powerful family of the Clanranalds trace their origin." This marriage of John of Isla with Amie Nic Ruari was a genuine one, though his plea for divorcing her was "uneasiness of conscience" in having married within the forbidden degrees of kindred, as there are convincing proofs that before marrying Amie he had applied to the Papal Court, and received in 1337 the necessary dispensation. After the separation Amie retired into Moidart where she soon set about building the present Castle Tirrim in A.D. 1353.

John of Isla was the first who received the title of "Lord of the Isles." Donald, the eldest son by the King's daughter* married the Countess of Ross, and through her founded his title to the Earldom. The claim was admitted, but the great accession of property which in this way came into the family of the Lords of the Isles was more than enough to excite the jealousy of the Scottish Kings, hence that protracted struggle between themselves and the Lords of the Isles, involving the Western Highlands and Isles for nearly one hundred and fifty years. The struggle ended in the title of the Lords of the Isles being forfeited in 1475 and 1493. The several insurrections which occurred during that period were organised by :—

Donald, second Lord of the Isles,	-	A.D.	1411
Alexander 3rd Do.	- -	,,	1429
Donald Balloch ,,	- -	,,	1431
John 4th ,,	- -	,,	1451
Sir Alexander of Lochalsh,	- -	,,	1497
Donald Dubh, or the Black,	- -	,,	1503
Sir Donald of Lochalsh,	- - -	,,	1513
Donald Gorm of Sleat,	- - -	,,	1539

These are followed by the troubles which ended in the ruin of the Islay family, and the transference of their estates to the Campbells.

The Civil War commenced under Charles I., and lasted more or less until after the rising of 1745, when the whole clan system was abolished.

Several of the Clanranald Chiefs were executed. Alexander, son of Godfrey, was treacherously seized and hanged by James I. at Inverness. The next, Allan MacRuari, fared no better, having been beheaded at Perth, in 1509. His son Reginald, called Raonuill Bàn, was hanged at Perth, in 1513, for some crime, real or imaginary. It was for Allan that the following poem from the collection of the Dean of Lismore, and translated by the late Rev. T. MacLauchlan, was composed—

The one Demon of the Gael is dead,
A tale it is well to remember ;
Fierce ravager of Church and Cross,
The bald head, hoary, worthless boar.

. . . . . .

Mac Ruairi from the ocean far
Wealth thou'st got without an effort
'Tis a report,
Bald head Allan, thou so faithless,
That thou hast, not thine only crime,
Ravaged Hy and Relig-Oran,
Fiercely didst thou then destroy
Priests' vestments and vessels for the mass.
Thou art Insh-Gall's great curse,
Thou art the man whose heart is worst
Of all who followed have thy Chief
There was the Abbot's horrid corpse.
Beside that other lawless raid
Against Finan in Glengarry,
Thine own country and thy friends
Have cursed thy bald head, Allan,
Thou hast cruelly oppressed,
The last of thy goodness was lost
Between the Shiel and the Hourn,
Worthless, cruel son of Ruari.

The fighting propensities of the MacDonalds of Clan-Ranald were very considerable. Besides the insurrections already enumerated, after the selection of John of Moidart to be leader of the clan, the bloody battle of Blàr-na-lèine was

* Margaret, daughter of Robert, High Steward of Scotland, who ascended the throne as Robert II.

fought between the MacDonalds and Camerons against the Frasers, where the claimant, Ranald Gallda, was slain in 1554. It was during the time of Allan, the successor of John of Moidart, that the tragedy took place in Eigg, by which the whole population of that island were smothered in a cave by the MacLeods of Skye. There is no certainty as to the exact date of this tragedy, but it must have been between 1584, the date of John's death, and 1593, the date of Allan's death, during whose tenure of the Chieftainship the cruel slaughter took place.

From these dates the Clanranalds were engaged in most of the political disturbances that kept the country in a state of unrest up to the time of Culloden. At the present day people marvel at the destruction of life and property that occurred in the good old days, but there can be no doubt the blood spilt by our ancestors was for our benefit, and through it we are now enabled to live in comparative harmony with our neighbours, thus corroborating the old adage that "it's an ill wind that blows nobody good." I must return, however, to my bards. The only fault I have with Father Charles MacDonald's book is that it is out of print, and difficult to procure. It is not generally known that the famous Alistair Mac Mhaighstir Alistair, according to Father Charles MacDonald, was not buried in Eilean-Fhionnan, owing to a severe gale then raging along the coast, so the Arisaig people got their way and he was buried in the cemetery of Kilmhoree, close to the present Catholic Church at Arisaig; neither is it generally known that his eldest son Ranald, the Eigg poet, had a tragic ending. In his old age his mind gave way, and he had to be watched more or less carefully, but, escaping from the house one night, he wandered away towards the sea-shore, where he was found lying dead the following morning, apparently shot with his own gun. Many of these facts, culled from local traditions, are both interesting and valuable to all MacDonalds connected with the Clan Ranald area, and the stirring events of the Jacobite period, especially so to the families of the chief, Admiral Sir Reginald MacDonald, and the houses of Borrodale, Glenaladale, Kinlochmoidart, and Morar, where interesting relics of the forty-five are still to be seen. The descendants of these would still rally to the cry of "The Standard on the Braes o' Mar," if necessary:—

Fy, Donald, up, and let's awa',
We canna langer parley,
When Jamie's back is at the wa',
The lad we lo'e sae dearly.
We'll go, we'll go, and meet the foe,
And fling the plaid, and swing the blade:
And forward dash, and hack and smash,
And flay the German carlie.

FARQUHAR D. MACDONELL.

(MACDONALD.)

From a note by Mr John Murdoch—one of the best known Highlanders in Scotland—regarding Farquhar D. MacDonell, it seems that this bard was a man of considerable ability and attainments. He emigrated to New Zealand a good many years ago, consequently not so much is known about him as we would wish. Prior to his leaving this country he lived at Plockton or Dornie in Lochalsh—a very romantic spot for courting the muses.

According to the late Thomas MacKenzie, so long Rector of the High School, Inverness, who was his teacher at one time, MacDonell was considered a man of great ability and genius. He wrote a great deal for the *Gael*, the *Highlander*, and the *Inverness Courier*, and so excellent were his MSS. that they were the delight of the compositors. He was a fine, genial man, and a general favourite with every one who knew him. His having emigrated, as a natural result interfered with his literary work and intentions of making his mark as a Gaelic poet, so it is not known how many songs he composed. I append stanzas of some of his songs, and a pibroch composed at the Antipodes. He died at Hawkesbay, New Zealand, within recent years—either last year or the year before last.

"Oran do Urramach Alastair Stiubhard
'Am Bun-Lochabair."

O! mosglam-se le sunnd is càil,
Is deachdar dàn gu buadhach leam
Do'n Fhìor-eun uasal fhoinnidh, fhial,
A's paiite ciall is buadhannan
Tha 'm Bun-Lochabar nan damh donn,
'S nam mac 's nan sonn clis fuasgailte,
Dheth 'n aitim rìoghail sheasmhach dhàn'
'Bha sgaiteach, dàicheil, cruadalach.

'S tu fiùran fearail, 's athail gnùis,
A's teinne lùgh 's a's anamanta,
A's guirme sùil 's a's deirge gruaidh,
'S tu fallain snuadhmhor geala-mhaiseach;
O shàil do bhuinn gu gruaig do chinn,
Gur cuimir, grinn, dealbhach thu,
'S na 'm faighte gairm a dhìon a' chrùin,
Bu ghlan air thùs na h-armailt thu,

There are other seven verses of this song in a somewhat similar strain, indicating a considerable amount of poetic power and command of language.

His pibroch is a long one, and, I think, appeared in the *Celtic Magazine* of October, 1878. It is entitled—

"Brolaich a' Bhàird."
(Dream murmur of the Bard: Urlar.)

Tha gart rium is gruaim
Air an Aodhaire;
'S duilich sin is gur cruaidh
Leam bhi smaointinn air:
Ciamar gheibhinn uam
'N cion dha 'bh' agam idir,
'Leanas rium gu buan,
Gus an caochail mi,
'S bochd e 'bhi ri luaidh
Fear 'bha teagasg sluagh
Iad 'bhi seirceil, suairc,
'S gun bhi sraonaiseach,
E bhi nis gu truagh,
Dh' easbhuidh a chuid buadh,
'G altrum goimh is fuath,
'S e gun aobhar aig', etc., etc.

In volume VII. of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, Mr William MacKenzie, of the Crofters Commission, read several papers on Mr Farquhar MacDonell's poems and songs. He describes him as "one of our best Gaelic bards," and certainly the songs Mr MacKenzie has brought to light in these papers are very good. One of them is entitled—

"Ceud Oidheirp an Duine—A Shonas agus a Thuiteam."

Anns an tùs mu'n do leigeadh air ceàird
Gu robh Adhamh 'n a Ghàradair deas,
'Mealtuinn taitneis gach beannachd 'us slàint,
Mar a shiubhail na tràthan le gean:
Cha do lagaich a neart air le sgìos,
Ni mò 'mhilleadh a nì air le sneachd,
'S cha do ghaiseadh a thoradh n' a bharr,
Le dad tuille 's a b' fheàird iad a theas.

It is a long song or poem of 144 lines, giving a description of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and is couched in very graphic and appropriate language. He also composed a witty dialogue entitled—"Comh-Abartachd Eadar Cas-shiubhail-an-t.sléibhe agus Coinnseag." The story in connection with it, as related by Mr MacDonell to Mr MacKenzie, is very interesting. "It is supposed that Cas-shiubhail-an-t-sléibhe was dwelling in one of the burghs or dunes, whose ruins are still to be seen in Glenbeg, a divisional valley of Glenelg. "Coinnseag" was a daughter of "Gnugag," who lived in another burgh or dùn at Aoineag, on the Letterfern side of Loch Duich. After the death of her mother, "Coinnseag" got possession of the farm now called Ardintoul, and she took up her abode at a spot known at the present day as "Guraban Connseig," on the left hand side as a person enters Kylerhea from the east. During the lifetime of Coinnseag, and many years afterwards, the farm was called "Dabhach Coinnseig." She was a most inhospitable woman; never desired any person who entered her house to sit down, much less did she offer a morsel of food." Cas-shiubhail-an-t-sléibhe on hearing of her evil reputation, resolved to test the accuracy of the stories told about her for himself, and, accordingly, dressed in the disguise of a beggar, and on entering her house, was greeted with:—

"Cò-as a thàinig fear a' bhuilg chraobhaich,
'S e gu toirteil, trom, tarbhach?"

Esan—"Thàinig mis', a bhean mo ghaoil,
O lic a' chaoil 'am beul an anmoich."

Ise—"C'ainm a th' ort?
Esan—"Uilleam-dean-suidhe."
Ise—"Uilleam dean suidhe!"
Esan—Suidhidh, suidhidh, 's ro mhath 'n airidh,
'S deagh bhean an tighe 'g a iarraidh.

A long dialogue ensues between them, the stranger displaying a good deal of wit, and the "Coinnseag" making herself as disagreeable as possible, however he matched her at last.

MacDonell also composed several other songs and poems, amongst which are a long poem of 128 lines on the Gaelic bards, in which he mentions all the principal bards—Ossian, Alex. MacDonald, Màiri nighean Alastair Ruaidh, Robb Donn, Iain Lom, the Clarsair Dall (Roderich Morrison), Alastair Dubh MacDonald, Buchanan, Duncan bàn MacIntyre, William Ross, etc., and even Homer,—upon the whole an excellent poem. It is to be found in volume IX. of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, also a long poem on the Highlanders, of 112 lines, which gained the second prize of the Highland Society of Edinburgh, the first stanza of which is as follows:—

'S fìor airidh air beannachd nam bàrd,
Deagh Chomunn nan àrmunn fial
A bheothaich gach cleachdadh, a's gnàths,
A bha aig na Gàidheil riamh;
O'n 's toileach leoth 'fhaicinn 'an dàn,
Mar sgapadh 's gach ceàrn an sìol,
Nior mheal mi idir mo shlàint
Mur cuir mi gun dàil e sìos.

Another song by the same author is a "Dnanag Chompanais," a company or jovial song, in fact a drinking song, to the air of "Let's be jovial, fill your glasses.

Chorus.

Hò rò air falldar araidh,
Falldar i-o raraidh hò,
Falldar i ri-o raraidh
Falldar i-o raraidh hò.

1st verse.

Eirich suas, a Bhean-an-taighe,
'Us cuir car dhiot mar bu nòs,
Cuimhnich gur i 'nochd an Nollaig.
'S cur am bòtul 'n a mo dhòrn.
Ho ro, etc.

Fair a bhos e le do ghàire,
Cha mhisde sinn làn na cuaich,
Dh'fhailteachadh nan aoidhean càirdeil,
'Chuir an daimh an so air chuairt.
Ho ro, etc,

This jovial song has got 18 verses or 72 lines, and seems a very good song of the light-hearted order; those that point to a short and merry life.

There is another song of MacDonell's, and a good one too, entitled "Moladh nan Gàidheal"—in praise of the Gael—of 12 verses, 96 lines, with the following chorus :—

Hug o-ho laill o-ho
Laill o-ho ro i,
Hug o-ho laill o-ho
Laill o-ho ro i,
Hug o-ho laill o-ho
Laill o-ho ro i,
Gur fearail na Gaidheil,
Mar b' àbhaist 's gach linn.

1st Stanza.

Bha' n t-urram a ghnàth
Aig na Gàidheil 's gu'm bi,
'S gu'n canadh na Bàird sud,
O làithibh Mhic Fhinn,
Na fiùrain neo-sgathach,
Buaidh-ghàireach 's an strì.
'S iad cinneadail, dàimheil,
Ro chàirdeil 's an t-sith.
Hug o-ho, etc.

We do not know enough about MacDonell's history to enable us to conclude to what family or to which locality he originally belonged, but the writer strongly suspects that he must have belonged to some Lochaber family, and probably a scion of the house of Keppoch. At any rate, he was undoubtedly a very good poet and one worthy of a niche in the temple of fame.

AONGHUS MAC DHOMHNUILL.

(ANGUS MACDONALD.)

Angus MacDonald, the Glen Urquhart bard, possessed poetic genius of a high order, judging from the poems of his which have appeared in the *Gael* and the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. His style somewhat resembled that of William Livingstone and R. MacDougall. He and Livingstone both cultivated the style and manner of Ossian, especially of the Gaelic of 1807. He had a particularly true eye for the beauties of nature, and being such a master of the Gaelic language, he could make himself terrible or tender, just as the muse stirred him. He possessed a fine and cultnred ear for music, which was of great importance to him, as he was a teacher of music for some time, consequently his verses are full of melody and harmonious cadences. He excelled in poetry of the Ossianic type, and, like all true poets, he exhibited great tenderness in his love lyrics. He was the first bard appointed to the Inverness Gaelic Society, and received in 1869 a medal for a prize poem from "the club of trne Highlanders" of London. His daughter, Mrs A. MacKenzie, Inverness, has inherited some of her father's genius, and is herself an authoress of considerable repute. He died at Redcastle, Inverness, and was buried in the churchyard of the parish of Killearnan, Muir of Ord, Ross-shire.

In the first volnme of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness there is a long lament by him for the late Lord Clyde, entitled "Dàn Mu Bhàs Chailein Chaimbeul, Triath Chluaidh," which begins—

Tha airm an laoich fo mheirg 's an tùr,
Chòmhdaich ùir an curaidh treun;
Bhuail air Alba speach as-ùr :—
A feachd tròm tùrsach 'sileadh dheur,
Mu Ghaisgeach Ghàidheil nan sàr bheairt,
Fo ghlais a' bhàis, mar dhùil gun toirt :
Triath na Cluaidh 'bu bhuadhaich feairt
'Ga chaoidh gu tròm, le cridhe goirt, &c.

and another poem of 90 lines on the heroism of the Highlanders in the Crimea, entitled, "Gaisge nan Gàidheil anns a' Chrimea," beginning—

Canainn dàn mu euchd nan sonn
'Choisinn cliù le'n glonn thar chàch
'Thug anns a' Chrimea buaidh.
A dh' aindeoin cruadal bhuail nan dail

Bhagair ar eascaird eitidh borb,
Math-ghamhuinn garg na h-Airde-tuath :
Le foill is fairneart, mar a chleachd,
Umhladh is creach thoirt uainn, &c.

Also a translation of the National Anthem into Gaelic, which gave great satisfaction to the Gaelic Society at the time.

In volume IX. of the Transactions of the same Society there is a song of 64 lines by the same author, to Cluny MacPherson, which was quoted by Mr William MacKenzie, who read a paper—"Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio"—before the Society on the 19th of November, 1879. He speaks of him as "the old bard," who had the greatest admiration for the venerable chief of the MacPhersons. The song is to the air of "Blue Bonnets over the Border," and seems a very good one.

Chorus.

Seinn, seinn, seinn gu caithreamach :
Fonn, fonn, gu h-aighearach buaghar :
Leum, leum, leum gu farumach,
Sgeula na h-ealaidh mu'n fhlath Tighearna Chluainidh

1st Verse.

Thoir soraidh le beannachd do Bhaideanach thairis
Do'n cheann fheadhna 'thug barrachd an caithream
na h-uailse,
An suairceas, 'an glanaid, cha chualas cho tairis,
Gach dùil a sìor aithris mu mhaith Tighearna
Chluainidh.

He also composed a long elegy of 76 lines on the late James Murray Grant of Glenmoriston, beginning—

A chruit thiamhaidh nam pong bròin,
Dùisg gu ceòl 'bheir deòir 'nan taom,
Seinn gu trom mu'n eug a leòn
Gach Gàidheal còmhla air gach taobh !
A cheòlraidh bhròin a' chòmhra àigh,
Deàrrs a mach ; mo chàil na mùch
'S an can mi cliù Mhic Phàdruig ghràidh,
Thar tonn do shàr 'bha riamh 'nar dùthaich, &c.

It is not divided into stanzas, it is one continuous long poem indicating considerable ability throughout, showing, together with his other poems, that our poet well deserved the honour of being appointed first bard to the Gaelic Society of Inverness. It would be fitting if the said society would collect all the poems of their bards and publish them separately.

ALASTAIR DOMHNALLACH.

(ALEXANDER MACDONALD).

The only notice I have met with of this poet was in Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's "Glenbard Collection." It is a long poem of 192 lines, in form of a dialogue between the bard and his wife over his own picture, and runs as follows :—

AM BARD (THE BARD).

'Fhir-shiubhail dean innseadh
Do'n uasal Mac-Isaaic
Gur toilicht' tha m' inntinn
A' brìodal ri m' chàil,
Bho'n dh' fheuch e dhomh 'n innleachd
'S a rinn e gu sìobhalt'
Mo choltas ro-chinnteach
A shìneadh dhomh 'm làimh ;
'N uair ghlac mi 'n am dhòrn e
Gu'n d' fhàs mi cho leòmach
'S gu'n d' shaoil mi gur coirneal
Glan òg a bha 'm dhàil ;
Bidh na h-ighean bòidheach
'N uair thig iad 'na chòmhail,
'Ga shlìobadh 's 'ga phògadh
'S a feòraich cò e.

A' BHEAN (THE WIFE).

'S a dhuine bi ciallach
Is faicleach mu d' bhriathran,
Cha'n fhaca mi riamh
Dad de bhriadhachd 'ad ghnùis ;
Le d' bhòilich gun aithne
'S ann tha thu 'd chùis-fhanaid,
Ged fhuair thu 'n diugh faileas
Cha b' airidh air thù :
Gu'n d' chaill thu do mhath ris,
Do thùr agus t' aithne,
'S e 'n crochadh ri balla
Fo amharc do shùil,
Cha'n fhaigh sinn bonn math dhiot
Bho'n fhuair thu 'chùis-mhagaidh,
'S b' e turas a bhreamais
'Thug dhachaidh e dhuinn ! etc., etc.

The following are some stanzas of a song composed by John MacDonald, the hunter, after he had gone to Nova Scotia. :—

Mi 'n so 'am aonar is tric mi 'smaointinn
Gur h-iomad caochladh tigh 'nn air an t-sluagh,
Cha chòir do dhaoine 'bhi gòrach daonnan,
Ged bhios iad aotrom an dara h-uair,
A ruith an t-saoghail 's gun ann ach faoineis,
E mar a' ghaoth 'bhios ag aomadh uait !
Le 'ghealladh briagach gur beag a's fiach e
'N uair 'théid do thiodhlaiceadh anns an uaigh.

Ma gheibh fear greim air 's gu'n dean e stòras,
Gu'm fàs e bòsdail 's e mòr air càch,
Bidh ad is cleòc air, bidh spuir is bòtuinnean,
Bidh each le pròis aige 's "carry-all,"
Ma bha thu 'd rògaire tha thu gòrach,
Mar h-iarr thu tròcair mu'n tig am bàs :
Théid t' anam brònach a chuir 'san dòruinn,
'S cha 'n fheàrr an t-òr dhuit na dorlach càth.

'N uair bha mi gòrach 'an toiseach m' òige,
Cha b' ann do stòrus a thug mi spéis,
Ach siubhal mòintich air feadh nam mòr-bheann,
'S bhiodh damh na cròic' ann bu bhòidheach
gleus :
Mu fhéill-an-roid gu'm bu bhinn a chrònan
'N uair bhiodh e deònach 'bhi 'chòir na h-éild',

B' fheàrr na'n cùinneadh 'bhi air a chùlthaobh
Le m' ghunna dùbailt 's le m' chù air éill.

Mo ghaol an cùirtear d'am bi am bùirean
'N uair chuirteadh cù ris bu lùthmhor ceum,
A' ruith gu siùbhlach 's e 'g iarradh shùrdag
'S e' toirt a bhùirn air gu dlùth 'na leum ;
Cha b' iad na luigeanan trom neo-shunndach,
Ach gillean subailt' bhiodh as a dhéigh,
A bhuidhneadh cùis air le gunna dùbailt',
Le luaidhe 's fùdar, 's spor ùr 'na gleus.

In Dr. George Henderson's "Leabhar nan Gleann," there is mention of a Gaelic poet named Ronald MacDonald, South Uist—"Raoull Mac Dho'uill 'Ic Aonghais Bhàin," a scion of the house of Glenaladale. His grandfather went to Uist for protection, after killing an otter belonging to Mac 'Ic Alastair, Glengarry. His first poem is a lament for a friend who was drowned at Greenock :—

1st stanza—

Fhuair mi naigheachd o dh' fhalbh mi
Nach bu mhath leam a dhearbhadh co luath,
Air an òganach thlachdmhor
Nach 'eil dùil leam ri fhaicinn air chuairt ;
Cha do leig iad thu dhachaigh,
Rinn iad tuilleadh 's do neart a thoirt bhuait,
'S ann air deireadh na sùighe
A dh' éirich a mhìothlamh thruagh.

It extends to 72 lines, in which he extols the virtues and prowess of the deceased, and expresses pity for his children, and sisters, etc. It is altogether a very good poem. His next is "Ceathranna a rinn am bàrd ceudna 's e bochd," lamenting his own state in illness, and that neither doctors nor medicine could do him any good : 13 verses, 52 lines.

Another is to "Alastair Torraidh" (Torrie), in which he praises his friend's truthfulness, neat hand-writing, and gentlemanly behaviour in general : 46 lines. His fourth is to a skiff—a short poem.

His "Oran do dh' fhear Cille-Bride," William MacMillan, from Skye, who was very kind to the people in time of great scarcity, about 1847—probably during the potato famine—is also very readable. His last is "Oran Sheumais Mhèir," song to big James, of 48 lines, describing his good qualities in laudatory terms.

There is another poem of 56 lines in Dr. George Henderson's book entitled "Rabhadh Mhic-Shimi," Lord Lovat's warning, after John Bàn of Keppoch's MS., probably by Father Farquharson (of Strathglass), whose name occurs in the Ossianic controversy, according to the tradition of the "Sliochd-an-Taighe" family. This was the Lord Lovat who was beheaded in 1747. The song is not very complimentary to the "unfortunate nobleman."

REV. FATHER ALLAN MACDONALD.

The Rev. Allan MacDonald of Eriskay, Sound of Barra, compiler of "Comh-Chruinneachadh de Laoidhean Spioradail," published by Mr Hugh MacDonald, Oban, in 1893, is a Lochaber man, and a scion of the House of Keppoch, Bohuntin branch. There are sixty-two hymns in his book, but there are no notes to show how many of them are of his own composition. "Laoidh A' Phurgadair," has already been mentioned as being the composition of the late Father Angus MacDonald, and "Laoidh Mhoire" probably composed by Silis na Ceapaich, but the words in some of the stanzas in Father Allan's are different from the version I have got of Silas' hymn. Several hymns he has translated from the Latin showing that he is a competent scholar both of Gaelic and Latin. Those translated from the Latin are "Laoidh-Chuirp Chriosta," "Laoidh 'Spioraid Naoimh (Vene Creator), "Gu'n seinn mi Laoidh do Mhoire," "Laoidh mu'n Nollaig," (a hymn about Christmas), "Laoidh na H-oidhche," (a hymn for night), and one for "Smàladh an Teine," setting the fire for the night. Good Catholics in the Highlands had a great many of these hymns for different occupations. This one about arranging the fire for the night runs thus :—

Smàlaidh mise 'nochd an aingeal
Mar a smàlas Mac Moire,
Gu'm bu slàn an tigh 's an teine !
Gu'm bu slàn a' chuideachd uile !
Cò bhios air a làthair ? Peadar agus Pàl ;
Cò bhios air an fhaire 'nochd ? Moire,
Geal 's a Mac Bial Dé a dh'innseas,
'S 'Aingeal a labhras—
Aingeal 'an dorus mo thaighe
Gu'n tig an latha geal am màireach.*—Amen.

There is one long one of 168 lines entitled "Criosta 'g a Thairneadh Ris a Chrois" (Christ being nailed to the Cross) ; one descriptive of the mass, one on death, and a variety of religious subjects. The one on Purgatory is suggestive :—

Mise so 'am prison iseal
Leam is tìm a bhith 'g a fhàgail,
'Snàmh air loch nach fhaodar innseadh
Gur uisge na dìle na sàil' e
Ach prounstal is teine gun diocladh
Dh'òrduich Dia—'s e 'phian a's fheàrr e—
Far am bi 'n t-anam 'g a riasladh
Gus an dìol e h-uile fàirdein."

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* There is a translation of this hymn in Mr Carmichael's "Or agus Ob."

Another fine hymn of twenty-nine verses is "Taladh Chriosta," air fonn "Cumha Mhic Arois," the first stanza of which is—

Mo ghaol, mo ghràdh, is m' fheudail thu !
M' iountas ùr is m' eibhneas thu !
Mo mhacan àluinn, ceutach thu !
Cha-n fhiù mi fhéin 'bhi 'd dhàil.

The Day of Judgment and many others are also very good. Many stories are afloat as to the state of tension that existed between Catholics and Protestants in former times, which has now fortunately in a great measure passed away. Priests were reported to have horns upon their heads even as late as the first decade of the present century. The writer knew a lady in Skye, who on one occasion walked 12 miles across a hill to see a priest in order to satisfy herself as to whether he had horns or not, and was both surprised and disappointed that he presented no resemblance to his Satanic majesty ! He also knew a gentleman who had been in the Glengarry Fencibles in the Rebellion in Ireland in 1798, and who used to relate that a notice at a Protestant Church in a certain district ran as follows :—" Members of all congregations may enter this church except Roman Catholics." A witty Irishman in passing noticed it and wrote underneath—" Whoever wrote this has done it well, for the same is written on the gates of Hell !" There are also some very smart allusions to similar subjects in Gaelic, too long to relate. The writer hopes that this slight digression will be some solatium to Father Allan MacDonald for having mentioned his excellent collection of hymns which he regrets is now out of print.

MAIREARAD SHAW NIC DHOMHNUILL.

Margaret Shaw MacDonald, better known as Miss Maggie S. MacDonald, a granddaughter of John MacDonald, the poet, and " Màiri Laghach " the second, was born at Crobeg, Lochs, in Lewis. Her father, Donald, was the youngest son of " Màiri Laghach's " family, and was tacksman of Crobeg, from the time of his father's death, till 1876, when he removed to Dun, Carloway. It was at that time Miss MacDonald composed her first lines of poetry. Leaving her old home had such an effect upon her that she at once composed the poem "My native hills for me," which was published in the *Highlander*. From her childhood upwards she was of a very studious disposition, and had a powerful memory. When only 11 years of age she got a prize for committing the 14 chapters of Zechariah to memory. She could hardly be kept from school. Her parents and teachers watched her studies with much zeal, and one of her teachers in particular, so far encouraged her in her studies that he, at his own expense, offered to send her to a training college, and although her parents were quite able to send her themselves, they considered her too young at the time, so allowed the kind offer to lapse. This friend and teacher is now the Rev. John G. MacNeill of Cawdor, Nairnshire, editor of " An Fhianuis." Under his and his brother's, Dr. Nigel MacNeill, of London (now stationed at Ilford), able tuition, at the age of 12 she was able to take her place with the senior boys and girls of her school.

Latin was a branch of study unknown among girls in those days, but Mr MacNeill, to encourage her in her studies, put her on to Latin along with the senior boys, and no other girl was taught it in the school but herself. After she and her youngest sister and brother left school, her father engaged a tutor for them for two years. Before leaving her school at the age of 12, she felt inclined to write poetry, and often when writing her copybook at the desk, her teacher found her scribbling away lines of poetry, showing that the child's poetic talent was budding. Shortly after composing " My native hills for me," some verses of hers in Gaelic were also published in the *Highlander*. After removing to Carloway in 1876, she felt so homesick and melancholy that she began to " court the muse " in real earnest. Her next poem was a Gaelic one, composed at the time when the rumour came that the young Reserve and Militia of Lewis were to be called out. It was also at the time that the Rev. Angus MacIver, Uig, had gone over from the Free to the Established Church, and was inducted to the Uig Parish Church, where, by his preaching, he won over the most of the Free Church congregation. Both circumstances produced such a profound impression upon her youthful imagination that the Gaelic poem, " Ged dheanainnsa rann a sheinn " was the result, which was published by her warm and staunch friend, Mr John Murdoch, in the *Highlander*, to which she also contributed a good deal of local news. At that time she could speak and write Gaelic thoroughly, which was further improved by her father sometimes holding family worship in Gaelic for the

benefit of their Gaelic-speaking servants, besides, her father often made her and her sister read some verses from the Gaelic bible, so they soon came to know it very well.

Another friend who helped to encourage her in her poetical aspirations was the Rev. Mr Macrae, Carloway (still living), to whom she composed some lines in 1876, which she never published. For several years after going to Carloway she composed numerous pieces, some of which were never written down. In 1885, Mr Munro Ferguson of Novar and the late Dr. MacDonald contested Ross-shire and had a hot fight of it. She had then a secret admiration for "Novar," and composed a poem to him which appeared in the "Ross-shire Journal," and for which she was afterwards personally thanked by Mr Ferguson himself. After her father's death in 1892, she composed an elegy on his death, which appeared in the "Oban Times," and was repeated by "Fionn" before the Lewis and Harris Association in Glasgow in the same year. The above was the last poem she has written. The only other literary production since then was "A Ramble through Skye," by a visitor, published in the "Oban Times," in 1894. Miss MacDonald has composed no less than fourteen more poems, besides "My native Hills for Me." They are:— "In memory of R. G. MacFarlane," 1881; "To a loved one," 1881; "Our own fireside," 1881; "To the young reserve militia of Lews being called out," 1882; "To ye Bard," 1890: "In memory of H. Woodham," 1887; "On seeing a friend die," 1884; "To Novar," 1885; "'Twas only a dream," 1888; "An adventure with the Bernera bulls," 1889; "Two acrostic love poems," 1889; "And art thou still the same as in those years," 1892; "In memory of the Rev. Dr. MacDonald," 1892; "In memory of my Father," 1892.

Two of her poems, one in Gaelic and the other in English, are appended for our readers to judge of this new bardess' poetic powers. Miss MacDonald is still young, and there is every probability of our hearing of her again, at which, I am sure, all the members of the clan will rejoice.* She has not yet recovered from a severe attack of influenza she had last year.

This is an appropriate place to mention some other members of "Màiri Laghach's" descendants who possessed the poetic gift. The late Mrs Kenneth MacKenzie, Stornoway, eldest daughter of "Màiri Laghach," was no mean poetess. She composed a considerable number of spiritual songs remarkable for their musical and felicitous expression, some of them being still preserved by Miss MacDonald's eldest brother, who also has composed several poems. This gentleman, Charles Norman MacDonald, divinity student, has got in MS. several touching pieces, though he does not affect courting of the muse; these are:— "Winter in the tomb," "Lines on the death of a friend," and "Carved names." Her youngest brother also, David Roderick, now in Dakota, U.S.A., has often been heard singing his own ditties. Her eldest sister, who is called after "Màiri Laghach," before her marriage composed some verses on her then lover, the late Mr Angus MacPhail ("Æneas Paulus")† who was himself a poet of great ability, and who left behind him some beautiful poems. The Rev. Wm. John MacDonald, of Free St. Brycedale Church, Kirkcaldy, also a grandson of "Màiri Laghach," seems to have inherited the poetic gift, for not long ago he composed some beautiful verses to his wife on the anniversary of their marriage, full of beauty and tenderness. Another sister of our poetess is married to the Rev. Peter MacDonald, Stornoway, late of Free St. Columba Gaelic Church, Edinburgh. The whole of "Màiri Laghach's" family must have been possessed of considerable ability. Her second son, Roderick, was editor of the *Picton Observer*; another, Alexander, was captain of an East Indiaman. Two of them were merchants in Stornoway, and the youngest, Donald, was the father of the subject of our sketch.‡ Another of her grandsons, the Rev. N. C. MacFarlane, now of Juniper Green, Edinburgh, composed a beautiful elegy on the death of his father; all being sufficient evidence of the hereditary transmission of poetic genius. A brother of Màiri Laghach's also had the poetic gift, having composed some beautiful verses, which forces us to conclude that here we have a very remarkable and talented family.

"To the young Militia and Reserve of Lewis on hearing a rumour that they were to be called out in 1882":—

Ged dheanainnsa rann a sheinn,
Cha togar leam fonn no ceòl,
Tha m' inntinn 'am breislich 's an àm
'S mo chridhe gu trom fuidh bhròin.

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* Her maternal uncle, the late Alex. MacLeod, Struan, Skye, was a poet of some local repute, so she has inherited the poetic gift from both sides of the house.

† Nom de plume.

‡ See also an article by the author on "Màiri Laghach," in the October number of the *Celtic Monthly*, 1898.

Oir thàinig oirnn naigheachd 'bha truagh,
'S a chuireas an sluagh fuidh bhròin,
'S e naigheachd a bhuineas gu cruaidh
Ri Eilean mo luaidhe-sa, Leòdhas.

O Alba nan gaisgeach 'bha treun,
'S a sheasadh iad féin 's an strì,
A nis dol a chogadh le chéil'
'N aghaidh nàimhdean nach géill 'an sìth.

Tha muinntir Mhilitia 's Reserve,
A nis air an éigheach a mach
A sheasamh na rìoghachd 's iad féin
Ochain! mo léireadh 's mo chreach!

Tha neul tiugh dorcha co-dhiù
Is coltas ri diomb air Leòdhas,
'Nuair tha daoine 'bha soilleir o thùs
A' briseadh a' chùmhnaint mhòir.

'S a' fàgail na h Eaglaise-Saoire,
A sheas bho chionn ùine gun ghò,
'S a' leantuinn gach buachaill' gun spéis,
'Chuir sgapadh 'san treud gu mòr.

O chaidh bhur fògradh thar chuan,
Gu bearn 'dheanamh suas 's gach àit,
Tha muinntir bhur daimhe 's bhur luaidh
Gu muladach truagh fuidh phràmh.

A' caoidh nam fear ro shuairce
A chaidh 'thoirt uapa thar sàile
A chosnadh urraim is buaidh
'S nach pill o'n chuairt ach pàirt.

Is lìonmhor màthair 's bean phòsda,
Is piuthar fuidh bhròin a tà
An diugh 's gach àite air feadh Leòdhais,
A' caoidh gu mòr luchd an gràidh.

Maille ri leannanaibh òga
'Thug geallanna pòsda gu bàs,
An diugh air an sgaradh o chéil'
Is cianail leam féin an càs.

Agus nis Leòdhasaich mo rùin
Is fàsach an dùthaich 'n 'ur déigh,
Tha deur air iomadach sùla
A' caoidh nam fiùghalan gleusd.

Is ged nach tigeadh an là
'S am faighte 'san àite sibh féin,
Tha mìle beannachd luchd-gràidh
Is chàirdean gu bràth 'n 'ur déigh.

O, Shasuinn! do bhratach tog suas,
Le urram is uaill 's gach àite,
Air Russia mhòr 'thoirt fuaime
A' leagadh luchd d'fhuatha gu làr.

Cobharthaich an neart is an uaill,
'Tha còmhnuidh 'san t-sluagh fuidh d'làimh
Na Gàidheil thapaidh o thuath,
A choisinn a' bhuaidh 's gach blàr.

O Righ na glòire ta shuas,
Nach cronuich thu sluagh 'na thràth,
O dhòrtadh fola mu'n cuairt,
'S o bhuaireadh casg an làmh.

Bha feum gu mòr ach air truas,
Is cobhair uailse o'n àird,
Is teagaisg 'sa sìth do t' shluagh
Chum do mholadh gu buan 's gu bràth.

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER, 1892.

Dark day of gloom! that rent my soul in twain,
Beloved father! when I saw thee go,
And leave me in this world of grief and woe—
To me thy death was loss—to thee 'twas gain;
I watched the flickering light of life go down,
My ear was quick to catch each hurried breath,
I did not think the cruel hand of death
Would lay thee low and mark thee for his own;
With quickening steps he laid his chilly hand
On thy dear brow, I could not keep thee back,
Oh father! I would follow in thy track,
And join thee with the happy glorious band
That stand before the Throne, where all is light
And endless bliss and love in that glorious sphere
Where now thou art. We would not have thee here
And leave that Home where all is pure and bright:
Thy place is empty now, a dismal void
Is in our hearts and home that nought can fill;
Weak Nature wrestles, but Faith bids us be still
And looking up, behold thee in thy joy,
And Faith triumphant over Nature, sees
Thy soul's bright gladness—Nature sees but gloom,
Faith sees beyond the darkness of the tomb,
And lifts our hearts, and gives us rest and peace:
Sweet memories linger round each hallowed place
Where thou wert wont to tread; the vacant chair
Where thou didst sit, I still can see thee there
With a bright smile upon thy peaceful face;
No silent tears nor heart distending sighs
Will ever bring thee back to me again,
I must be still, nor give thy spirit pain,
There rest "Beloved" till we meet on High.

ALISTAIR MAC DHOMHNUILL.

ALISTER MACDONALD, INVERNESS.

Alister MacDonald, the author of "Còinneach 'us Coille," is the son of Angus MacDonald, crofter, of Achnanconeran, Glenmoriston, a man of exceptional intelligence, still living, and a great great-grandson of Alexander MacDonald, one of the famous seven men of Glenmoriston who protected Prince Charlie for some days in the wilds of the Glen. Our poet was born at Achnanconeran on the 4th of Sept., 1860, and to his mother is due the credit of writing and publishing in the midst of very unsympathetic circumstances, the songs of Archibald Grant, the Glenmoriston bard. When 18 years of age Mr MacDonald removed to Inverness, where he entered the service of the Highland Railway Company as a clerk, and he is now assistant accountant of the company. Having taken several prizes at some of the competitions held some years ago under the auspices of the Gaelic society

of Inverness, he had only been a short time in town when he became an active member of that learned body, to the "transactions" of which he has from time to time contributed interesting papers. Articles on Highland subjects from his pen have also appeared in other Celtic publications, and he contributed largely at one time—and still occasionally—to newspaper literature. Mr MacDonald is a master of shorthand (Pitman's system). He is the possessor of the National Phonographic Society's teaching diploma, and taught the art successfully for years. He is assistant secretary to the Gaelic Society of Inverness, and an active member of the Clan Donald Society also. But he is, perhaps, best known to his countrymen as an enthusiastic lover of Highland music and song. For years past he has cultivated Gaelic poetry, and his compositions frequently appeared in the Gaelic column of the *Northern Chronicle*, and other Highland publications. As he is still comparatively a young man, we hope to have many more poems from his poetic pen, and this hope is buoyed up by the fact that he has taken some prizes at the Highland Mòd competitions.

Mr MacDonald's laudable object in publishing his "Còinneach 'us Coille" was to popularize and encourage native song-singing among Highlanders at the present day. He very truly observes that "most of the productions of our ancient bards, beautifully poetic as they certainly are, do not lend themselves readily to modern popular singing," and the writer quite agrees with him when he says that many of the songs in our standard works are much too long; they are more poems than songs. At the same time, of course, one need not sing all the verses of any song, but there is a heaviness about some for which lighter songs might be substituted. As the demand for Gaelic songs and music increases, no doubt all objectionable features will be reduced to a minimum. At anyrate, all the Highland airs should be preserved by everyone who is at all a patriotic Highlander, as it seems much easier to produce a new song to an old air than to compose new music.

In his "Còinneach 'us Coille," a book of 120 pages, Mr MacDonald has given seventy-three poems and songs, exhibiting an intimate and scholarly acquaintance with the Gaelic language. As he himself says "every piece except a few of the long ones should be sung," and they seem well adapted for that purpose. There is a free flow of language in his love songs that is very refreshing, and "there will be found in them something to awaken sympathy, intensify love, sweeten joy, and to reconcile to sorrow."

As a specimen of the sentimental, "Guanag na Dùthcha," to the air of "A nighean donn an t-sùgraidh," will convey an idea of his popular style of song:—

Thair dhomh-sa 'ghaoil do chaoimhneas,
'Se 'chuireadh fàilt' us loinn orm;
'S a dh' fhàgadh làn mi 'dh' aoibhneas
Gach là 'us oidhche 's maireann mi.

'S mòr a thug thu thaobh mi
Le d' mhais' agus le d' aoidheachd;
Tha ni-eiginn 'nad aoduinn,
Nach cuir an saoghal á m' aire-sa.

Tha cridhe fo do chìochan
'Tha 'deanamh nàdur grian domh
'S na 'm faodainn 'dhol do t' iarraidh
Bhiodh Dia agam ri bheannachadh.

Na 'm faighinn thu ri' bhuannachd,
Bu deònach leam an uair tighinn,
'S am bithinn 's mo ghuanag,
'An gaol bith-bhuan neo-dhealaichte.

And of his patriotic songs, the following stanzas from "Oran do Chomunn-Chlann Dòmhnuill," shows what the author is capable of:—

Thoir tasgaidh bhuain 'us beannachadh
A dh' ionnsuidh uasail cheannasach
A' chomuinn bhuadhar, fhearalach,
Dha'n uile dhual 'bhi smearalach,
A réir mar 'ghluais an seanairean—
'S e 'thi mi 'luaidh na maithibh
'Tha mu Chomunn glan Chlann Dòmhnuill.
'S e thi mi, etc.

Mac-Dhòmhnuill mòr nan Eileannan,
'Us Mac-'ic-Ailean sheasadh e;
Gleanna Comhann cha chéileadh e:
'S a' Cheapuich cha bhiodh deireadh oirr'
'S Gleann-Garradh dlù 's cha theicheadh e,
'Us iomadh fion-fhuil eile
Nach biodh leibideach 's a' chómhlan.
'Us iomadh fion-fhuil, etc.

These specimens are taken at random, and they are not necessarily the best, there are other and many excellent songs throughout the work, which mark our clansman as a contemporary bard of exceptionable ability, and one of whom much more will be expected in the future.

Since the "Còinneach 'us Coille" was published he has written and published the following additional songs, etc.—(1) "Brosnachadh Chloinn

Dòmhnuill," 1896 (a poem); (2) "Tìr nam Beann, nan Gleann, 's nan Gaisgeach," a song to the air of "E ho rò mo rùn a' chailin," by Wm. Ross; (3) Blàr Allt-a-Bhonnaich, battle of Bannockburn, which took Mr Theodore Napier's prize at the Highland Mòd for the best poem on that subject some two or three years ago (1896; (4) "Dunnian," a song on Dunean, Inverness, to the air of—"There grows a bonnie brier bush"; (5) "An uair is tinne 'n gad cuaille 's ann is dualaich dha bristeadh," a poem illustrating this well-known proverb; (6) "Coire Lusain," a song to an old air, the melody being very fine; (7) "Cruinneag a' Chlachain"—the maid of the clachan—a love-song also to a beautiful old air resembling a fairy whisper; (8) "Far a' bheil Loch Nis a' sanais Crònan tairis do Chillionan"—Where Loch Ness whispers to Cill Eonan—(Kilninian), and some love-songs that have not yet been printed.

Considering that Mr MacDonald has had few educational advantages beyond the usual routine of a country school, before the passing of the Education Act, broken by intervals of herding and crofting, his present position as a writer of English and Gaelic is very creditable indeed. Both his father and mother had a particularly wide acquaintance with the song literature of the Highlands, from whom he inherited that deep love of the music of his native country which he undoubtedly possesses.

Is e an t-ionnsachadh òg
An t-ionnsachadh bòidheach

Some of the best poems in "Còinneach 'us Coilleare "Mo Dhachaidh Gàidhealach," "Mo chaileag Ghàidhealach," "Am Fear-Fuadain," "Air cùl Achleagan Bàidheanach," "Tom-an-t-sheòmair," "Cumha Màthair," etc., besides those already quoted. Our promising bard is still singing away, not later than a few weeks ago he composed the following "Luinneag" on finding a small twig of heather under his feet in the office :—

Ged thàinig tu g' am ionnsuidh
Gun fhios a'm ciamar,
'S mise rinn an surd riut
A fhlùrain chamaich.
Ged thàinig, &c.

Fhuair mi 'm badan bòidheach
Anns an ofig bhòrdach,
'S rinn mo chridhe sòlas—
Bha mi òg feadh bheannaibh.
Ged thàinig, &c.

Ma 's ann a' togar càirdeas
Air fear cinnidh 'thà thu,
Cha'n'eil sin ro dhàn duit
'S fuil nan àrmuinn annam.
Ged thàinig, &c.

Fuil Chlann Dòmhnuill uasal
D' am bu ghnàth 'bhi uaibhreach,
'S iomadh blàr a bhuadhaich
Iad fo uaill do chaithream.
Ged thàinig, &c.

Chuir thu mis' a bhruadar
Air an làmh a bhuain thu,
'S shaoil leam gu'm bu ghruagach
A bh'air chuairt 's a' mhaduinn.
Ged thàinig, &c.

'S shaoil leam bhi le m' eudail
Mach a' cuallach spréidhe
'Nuair bha 'ghrian ag éirigh,
Air na sléibhtean fallain.
Ged thàinig, &c

S cinnteach mi nach d'fhàs thu
Am measg phearsan 'us phaipeir,
'S ann a fhuair thu t' àrach
Air an àrd chnoc ghreannach.
Ged thàinig, &c.

'S ged bu gheal 'us dearg thu
Tha thu nise 'seargadh,
'S tha do ghnùis a' dearbhadh
Gur a searbh leat t' aineal.
Ged thàinig, &c.

Cha b'e so an t-àite
'S am bu mhiann leat bàsachd,
'S cinnteach mi gu'm b'fheàrr leat
Glacaig àrd a' chanaich.
Ged thàinig, &c.

'S iomadh de chlann daoine
Tha mar sin 's an t-saoghal,
Là 'us là air faontradh
Fad o'n gaol 's an aithne.
Ged thàinig, &c.

TOMAS DONULLACH.

(THOMAS MACDONALD).

I am indebted to Mr Alister MacDonald, the Inverness poet, for drawing my attention to the works of the subject of the present sketch, viz., Thomas MacDonald, the bard of Abriachan, commonly called "Tòmas an Tòdhair." My information concerning him is derived from a paper contributed by Mr Alister MacDonald and read before the Gaelic Society of Inverness last spring, 1899. Our poet was descended from a family of MacDonalds, who, it is said, migrated at one time from Glen Urquhart and settled at Abriachan.

From the same MacDonalds it is believed the famous Bishop John MacDonald of Alvie sprung. His father, John MacDonald, resided on his croit, called Balintore, in Abriachan, during his life

time, and was married to Helen MacLachlan, the daughter of Rev. Mr MacLachlan, who laboured, at anyrate, for a time in the neighbourhood of Inverness. This Helen MacLachlan, the mother of our bard, was an aunt of the distinguished Celtic scholar, Dr. Thomas MacLauchlan of Edinburgh. The MacLachlans were well-known about Inverness. Another member of the same family was a teacher in Abriachan, and a sister, who kept house for him, also married in the same place. Mr Alister MacDonald's informant is married to a descendant of this marriage, so our bard inherited some talent from both sides of the house. He was born about 1822, and died in 1888. He composed a number ot songs and poems, mostly on local subjects. He was evidently a poet of considerable ability as will be seen by the poems which have been preserved. One of the most prominent features of his compositions is their sarcastic wit, which he could use with considerable freedom. His descriptive power will be seen from the following song in praise of Glen Urquhart, from which some stanzas are quoted—

ORAN DO GHLEANN URCHADAIN.

Tha Gleann Urchadain cho àluinn,
Fo sgàil nam beann ciar,
Le fìor oibre Nàduir
A' fàs ann an rian ;
Gach raon agus àite
'Is àilleanta sgiamh,
Le neòneanan sàr-gheal
Gu àirde nan sliabh.

Tha Meall-fuar-mhonaidh shuas,
Fo shuaicheantas làn,
Le 'bhàrr mulaich an uachdar
Thair' stuadhaibh nan càrn ;
'S gach taobh dheth air iathadh,
O iochdar gu 'bharr,
Le fuaranaibh ciatach
'An iochdar gach sgàirn.

Tha Eanruig 'us Coilltidh
'Cur loinn air a' ghleann,
A' tuirlinn tromh 'n oighreachd
Le gleadhraich 'nan deann ;
'S tha fonn-chrith le gaoir
Aig gach caochan 'us allt',
Gu mearganta 'taomadh
O aonach nan gleann.

Tha Creag-Neigh 's Creag-Mhònaidh
Air an còmhdach le coill,
'Cur dìon air a' chòmhnard
O dhoinionn nan sion ;
Tha iasg 'an Loch-Mhioclaidh
Agus eunach 's a' bhéinn
'S tha Rùsgaich 'us Diòmhach
'Nam frith aig na féidh.

Tha tigh-foghluim na h-òigridh
Air chòmhnard na dùthch'
Gu greadhnach 'an òrdugh
Le 'sheòmraichaibh ùr ;
'S na h-uaislean cho rianail
A' riaghladh a' Bhùird,
'S iad macanta, ciallach,
Gun fhiaradh gun lùb.

Tha 'n Caisteal air crionadh
Le siantaibh nan spéur,
'S a bhaidealan àrda
Air sgàineadh o 'chéil ;
'S cha 'n 'eil eachdraidh no seanchas
A dh' fhàg dearbhadh o chéin,
Air an àl 'chuir an àird e
No 'dhaingnich a stéidh.

Tha Loch-Nis nan tonn siùbhlach
Ag ionnlaid nan sgòrr,
Le fìor uisge cùbhraidh
Toirt dùbhlan dc 'n reòth' ;
'S tha Caolas Ghlinn-Urchadain,
Gu h-uirealach stòlt',
'Tighinn o aigeann a chonfhaidh
'S nam bo:b bhoinne mòr.

'S bi 'dh gach éun anns a' chrò-choill'
Co-chòrdadh r' a' chéil',
Le 'n ceilearadh bòidheach,
'Cur an òrdugh nan téud ;
'S bi'dh a' chubhag 's an smeòrach,
'S an òg mhaduinn Chéit,
Le an òranan ceòlmhor
Air meòraibh nan géug.

'S tha 'n ealtuinn an còmhnuidh
Co òrdail 'na cùrs',
'N uair a ghoireas iad còmhla
Le eò-sheirm a' chiùil ;
Le 'n aighearachd thaitneach
'Chuireadh m' aigneadh air sunnd,
'S mactalla 'toirt caismeachd
Air ais as na cùirn.

'N uair a theirgeas an geamhradh,
Thig an samhradh 'n a dhéigh,
'S tuitidh ùr-dhealt na Bealltuinn,
'Toirt fàs air an fhéur :
'S bi'dh flùraichean àillidh
Fo bhlàth air gach géug,
'S bàrr-guchd air gach meanglan
'S a' Mhòr-Lanntir gu léir

'S o 'n a fhuair sinn am Màidsear
A mhàn a Strath-Spé,
'S leis dùrachd gun àicheadh
An luchd àitich gu léir ;
'S tha càirdeas 'us fàbhar
'N a nàdur gu réidh,
Nach cuireadh e bàirlinn
Gu fàrdach luchd feich.

'S ann an armailt na Ban-Righ
A b' ainmeil a chliù,

Le prasgan de Ghàidheil,
Làn àrdain 'nan gnùis ;
Le 'n geur lannaibh stàilinn
Neo-sgàthach 'nan dùirn,
A' toirt buaidh air an nàmhaid
Ann am fàbhar a' chrùin.

'S bha 'm Màidsear co eudmhor
Ann an séidse Lucnù,
A' cur daingnich nan réubalt'
'S na spéuraibh na 'n smùid ;
'S luchd breacan-an-fhéilidh,
'S am béugnaidean rùisgt',
'Cur chéudan de nigearan
Sint' air an ùir.

'S gu'n òl sinn deoch slàinte
An Mhàidsear le sunnd,
Le glaineachan deàrr-lan
Ga 'n tràghadh gu'n grunnd ;
De stuth mireanach, làidir,
Soilleir, taitneach, 'us grinn,
O cheath' poite tarruingte,
'Chuireadh stàirn 'n ar cinn.

'S e dùrachd mo chàileachd
Gu dàn 'chur 'an céill,
'Chum 's gu 'm faighinn teachd dàn
Air a nàdur gu léir ;
Cha d' imich 's cha d' thàinig,
'S cha 'n fhàg e 'na dhéigh,
Fear eile 'bheir barr air
Gu bràth à Strath-Spé.

The references in this song to the late Major Grant are said to have been well deserved. The next song by Thomas MacDonald was in praise of the late Bailie W. G. Stewart, for many years one of the best known members of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. The song is entitled :—

"ORAN AIR MR W. G. STIUBHART."

Air fonn—"An nochd gur faoin mo chadal domh.'

Le fior-ghean gràidh, ceud soraidh slàn
Do'n fhleasgach àluinn, òg ;
'S na 'n d' fhuair mi iùl gu d' àrdachadh,
Cha'n fhàgainn thu 's a' cheò ;
Is ceann-iùil air thùs nan sàr thu,
'N uair thàrladh tu 'nan còir,
Le 'd òraidean 'gan gleusadh dhaibh,
Gu soilleir, réidh-ghlan fòil.

'S gur lionmhor buaidh tha sìnte riut,
Nach tàr mi innseadh 'n dràsd ;
Is Gàidheal foinnidh, fìnealt' thu,
Bho chrùn do chinn gu d' shàil ;
'S tha macantachd a's mìleantachd
Co-shìnte ri do ghnàths ;
'S tu smachdail, beachdail, inntinneach,
Gun mhì-run gun chion-fàth.

Thug Nàdur gibht mar dhìleab dhuit,
Le inntinn fhìor-ghlan réidh,
'Toirt eachdraidh bheachdail, chinntich dhuinn
Air iomadh linn o chéin ;
Le eudmhorachd 'ga mìneachadh,
Gun dichuimhn o do bheul,
'S iad uile làn de dhìomhaireachd,
'S an fhìrinn annt' mar stéidh.

Tha tùr 'us mùirn 'nad ghiùlan,
Gu fearail, sùnndach, fòil ;
Is gealtaireachd cha d' ionnsaich thu,
'S cha d' thug thu rùm do phròis ;
Air nàil', cha tugainn dùlan duit
An ùine bhios mi beò,
'S mo dhùrachd cheart cho dlùth riut,
'S a tha 'n driùchd air bharr an fheòir.

'S ann fhuair mi 'n eachdraidh chinnteach
Air an t-sìnnsireachd o 'n d' fhàs
An gaisgeach àluinn, fìnealt' ud,
Gun chron, gan ghiomh, gun ghaoid,
'Us air an stoc o 'n bhuaineadh e—
Cha shuarach e ri ràdh—
'Us e shìol nan rìghrean Stiùbhartach,
'Bha roimhe crùinte 'n Scàin.

Tha d' aignean air an stéidheachadh
Le beusalachd 'us gràdh,
'S do chleachdaidhean cho reusanach,
Gun ghruaim, gun bheud, gun ghaoid ;
Le inntinn ghrinn d' a réir sin,
Gu geur-chuiseach, gun mheang,
'S gach buaidh tha dùint' le d' chreubhaig,
Cha léir dhomh chur an cainnt.

Gur marsant' ealamh, ionnsaicht,' thu,
Gu tairis, mùirneach, stòld',
'S e fialaidheachd 'us fiùghantachd
An tùrn 's na chuir thu d' dhòigh ;
'S tha faoilt 'us aoidh 'nad ùrlar
Gu fallainn, sunndach, òg,
'S gur iomadh gruagach dhlùth-ghleusach
A dhùraichdeadh dhuit pòg.

'S tu thàlaidheadh na h-inghneagan
Le faoilt 'us brìodal beòil,
'S le d' aighearachd 'cur iompaidh orr',
'S le rìomhadh de gach seòrs' ;
Sgàileagan d' an t-sìoda
'Us a h-uile ni is bòidhch',
'S na 'n ceannaicheadh iad da-rireadh iad,
Cha bhiodh a' phrìs ro mhòr.

Tha ghliocas agus tàlantan
A' tàrmachadh 'nad chòir,
Gu misneachail, neo-sgàthach,
A' cur àbhachdais air seòl ;
A's tha mùirn as ùr gach là dhuit,
Anns gach àit aig sean a's òg,
'S gur tric do chliuth 's na gàsaidean,
'S gach ceàrna de 'n Roinn-Eòrp'.

Le deònachas no ain-deòineachd,
Thoir beannachd uam gun dàil,
Do 'n àrmunn àghmhor, cheanalta,
Cho tairseach air fàs ;
'Us fear do cheird gur ainneamh e,
Cho barraicht' riut thar chàch,
Ged 's mòr a tha de cheannaichean
'S a' bhaile 'm beil thu 'tàmh.

'N uair théid thu chòir nan àbhachdan,
Le feala-dhà gun bheud,
'S i cainnt na Féinne 's fheàrr leat—
A' Ghàidhlig àluinn réidh ;
'S tha seanchaidhean ri fàistinneachd
Gur i bh' aig Adhamh féin,
'S gur mùirneach rinn e h-àrach dhuinn,
Fo dhùbhar sgàil nan geug.

'S tu marcach an eich rùidhleinich
Is aotrom shùbhlas sràid,
Le luaths an théidh 'cur miltean deth ;
'S cha ghabh e sgìos gu bràth :
'S cha 'n iar e coirc no innlinn,
A's cha phàigh e cìs no càin ;
'S am fear a dhealbh an innleachd ud,
'S i 'inntinn nach robh 'n tàmh.

Ach 's fheudar bhi co-dhùnadh,
'S nach d'fhuair mi iùl fir-dàin ;
'S na 'n robh mi eagnaidh, ionnsaichte,
Gu 'm biodh a' chùis na b' fheàrr ;
Tha uaill air sluagh na dùthcha,
Gu 'n d' fhuair thu cliù thar chàch ;—
'S na 'm faighinn trian mo dhùrachd,
Cha bu chùram dhuit gu bràth.

The above and other items of information have reconciled the writer once more to Inverness and its inhabitants.

DOMHNULL DOMHNALLACH.

(DONALD MACDONALD.)

Another of our contemporary bards is Donald MacDonald, the Barvas bard. He was born at Galson, Lewis, in 1860. At the age of 18 he went to Stornoway to learn the trade of a blacksmith, and subsequently repaired to Inverness to get still further initiated in the intricacies of his trade. After a time he settled down at Barvas, where he still follows the trade of a blacksmith, and also cultivates his croft. It was while plying his work at Daviot that he made his first attempt at composing songs, the result being "Oran na Lic"—the song of the flagstone. He is tall, dark-haired, and handsome, stands 5 feet 10¼ inches, with a good physique, and has displayed considerable ability in the art of composition. He appears at his best when singing his own songs ; but he does not compose for composing sake, only occasionally when the spirit moves him. His songs are exceedingly popular in Lewis and elsewhere, and amount to about twenty in number. Hitherto he has shown no inclination to publish them, but his friends and admirers hope that this reluctance will soon wear away, and no doubt eventually they will be given in book form for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen and others. Among his more popular songs are "Oran na Parlamaid," "Mùrnag," "An Gàidheal 'an Tìr Chéin," "Iulach na cnamh," "Fàsachadh Ghabhson"—the Galson evictions—and "Nighean donn na buaile." We submit as a specimen of his ability, "Oran air Mùrnag"—one of the highest mountains in Lewis. Mr MacDonald is still a young man, and we still hope to see many more able poems from his fertile pen.

MURNAG.

Seisd.—Mùrnag Leòdhais, Mùrnag àluinn,
Mùrnag a' chuil duinn 's a' chàrnaich
'S ann leam bu mhiann a' bhi air t'àiridh
Air a' Mhòintich àird an Leòdhas.

Cha tig uasal do an dùthaich
Nach bi 'g amharc air do stùchdaibh,
Gloineachan 'gan cur ri 'shùilibh
Gus am faic e Mùrnag Leòdhais.

Cha'n'eil maraich' air na cuaintibh
Nach bi 'g amharc riut air uairibh,
Bìdh fear 's a' chrann aig àm a' chruadail
Gus am faic e gruagach Leòdhais.

Cha'n'eil culaidh bheag air sàile,
Cha'n'eil faoileag bhàn a sheòlas,
Cha'n'eil eun air sgéith 'san àite
Nach toir Mùrnag sgàth doibh còmhla.

'S e miann gach eun a bhi air t' fheurach,
'S e miann gach fiadh a bhi le 'chròicibh,
A' gabhail fasgaidh air do bheulthaobh
'S iad gun fhiamh a riamh fo d' sgòidibh.

Tha gach tulach beag 'us garbhlach,
Is beinn a' Bhàrbhais is i fo t' òrdugh,
Beanntan Uig th' an sùil gu léir ort
Gus am faigh iad féin do chòta.

Tha gach beinn fo bhinn do còmhraidh,
Tha na glinn a' seinn duit òrain,
Na lochan tàimh ag ràdh gur neònach
Mar tha 'n sùil air Mùrnaig Leòdhais.

Is gach fear-seilg a' dh' fhalbhas mòinteach
Chi thu le d' chrùn cho bòidheach,
Seileach caoin 'us d' fhraoch fo neòinean
Air ceann dualàch gruagach Leòdhais.

Bidh coilich choille gu moch a' triall riut,
Bidh a' chearc riabhach 's i ri gògail
Gus an luidh iad air do chliathaich
'S an àite 'is miannach leò 'bhi còmhnuidh,

Tha beanntaichean an Eilein Sgiathaich
'S a' bhéinn riabhach air a' Mhòrthir
Is iad 'g iarraidh tighinn dlùth dhuinn
Gus am faic iad Mùrnag Leòdhais.

Bha mò sheanair tric air t' àiridh
Buachailleachd nam bà fo t-òrdugh,
Is thu gach linn' gu t' fhaicinn uaipe
'S a cheann-a-tuath do dh' Eilean Leòdhais.

IAIN DOMHNALLACH AN DALL, OBAN.

(BLIND JOHN MACDONALD.)

John MacDonald, Oban, was born at Lochdonhead, Mull, about 1812, and died in Oban in 1884. For the following particulars regarding our poet I am indebted to Mr Duncan M'Isaac, Oban. His parents and grandparents were crofters at Lochdonhead, where his grandfather, Alexander MacDonald, and his father, Duncan MacDonald worked as blacksmiths. His mother's maiden name was Mary Campbell; his paternal grandmother's was Betsy Stewart. He was married to Catherine MacQuarrie, Bunessan, and a few years after marriage they removed to Oban, where they resided for the remainder of their lives. They are survived by two daughters and one son. For a number of years the bard earned a comfortable livelihood by coast fishing. When fifty-six years of age he lost the sight of one of his eyes through an accident in the nutwood, and the other eye became blind about five years afterwards, and so he was called Iain Dòmhnullach an Dall (blind John MacDonald).

In his youth he composed some Gaelic songs of a secular cast, but in later years, prefering religious themes, he composed a number of Gaelic hymns, a list of which is appended. These the bard's family hope to get printed soon in booklet form.

Our poet used to tell some wonderful stories about the Lochdonhead MacDonalds. His paternal grandfather—"An Gobhainn Mòr"—belonged to Glengarry. He was a very strong man, over six feet in height, and he always wore the kilt in the smithy, and elsewhere. Miss Betsy Stewart, of Athol, eloped with him when he was a young man, and on their way to Morven, when the young lady became tired walking, he wrapped her in his tartan plaid, and carried her on his back for nine miles (worthy couple; it is to be hoped they lived happy for ever after. Few swains at the present day would undertake such a loving honeymoon). On arriving in Morven they were kindly received by a friend there who was a blacksmith, and they were married in his house, where MacDonald learned his trade. They then went to Lochdonhead in Mull. He occupied a croft there, and carried on his trade as a blacksmith as well. Some of their descendants continued to act as blacksmiths there for several generations; the last of them left the place about thirty years ago. A father with three sons, all blacksmiths.

Upon one occasion the laird, Lachunn Mòr, ordered a son of the Gobhainn Mòr to become one of his fighting men, but the young man refused to obey, and he along with others, were by order of the laird locked up in a barn. The Gobhainn Mòr then sent word of the affair to Glengarry, who sent the following message to Lachunn Mòr, "Ged is leatsa an fheòil is leamsa an cnàimh-leig an Dòmhnullach mar sgaoil" (though the flesh is thine, the bone is mine, set MacDonald free). Upon receipt of Glengarry's message Lachunn Mòr after some enquiry set young MacDonald free, and invited the Gobhainn Mòr and his wife to the Castle, where he entertained them hospitably on account of their connection with Glengarry and Athol.

A measure of the bardic faculty wedded to music appears to have been preserved among the descendants of the Gobhainn Mòr; some of them composed Gaelic poetry, and most of the men played the bagpipes. Iain Dall, the subject of these notes, once made a set of bagpipes for himself, and he used to play them with great glee, and one of his brothers, by trade a turner, earned some fame as a maker of bagpipes in Skye.

There is a story to the effect that Iain Dall was once sent for in order that he might try to cure a sick cow by the power of some charm said to be in his possession. A young girl from Mull who was employed in the house of the owners of the cow advised them to send for Iain Dall in order that he might try the effect of the charm; they gave their consent, and the lassie soon took Iain into the byre, where, perhaps mostly with the object of pleasing the Mull girl, he quietly walked up to the side of the sick cow and muttered something into one of its ears. Happily the cow soon recovered its health, and the Mull lassie always maintained that the recovery was due to Iain's occult spell. The bard's sister Betsy (Mrs Stewart) composed a Gaelic poem upon the death of two of her boys who died young. The following are three stanzas from it:—

O, nis gabh truas dhiom
'S mi so 's an fhàsach chruaidh,
Mi smuaintinn a bhi gluasad
Fo d' bhrataich luachmhor fhéin.

Iehòvah dean rium fàbhar,
Mar a rinn thu e ri Màiri,
Mar a thug thu mo phàisdean
Gu d' àros a suas.

A sin cha bhi iad brònach,
'S bàs cha tig na 's mò orr',
Ach cuimhneach' air a' ghlòir sin
'S an sòlas ás ùr.

The following hymns were composed by John MacDonald:—"Comh-Ghairm a chum ùmhlachd," 60 lines; fonn—"Beinn Dòrain."

Thugaibh dhomh nis éisdeachd, ís géillibh gu buileach dhomh,
Oir tha mi 'g 'ur n-iarraidh 's e mo mhiann bhi fuireach leibh,
Oir tha mo chridhe 'n còmhnuidh 'n tòir oirbh gu bunaiteach,
'S ma bhitheas sibh dhomhsa dìleas cha dïobair mi tuille sibh.

"An Tobar Fìor Uisge," 76 lines; air fonn—"Cha'n'eil sonas ri a fhaotuinn anns na faochagan falamh."

Sibse uile chlann daoine,
Tha sibh faoin ann 'ur barail
Ag iarraidh sonais an t-saoghail
Far nach fhaod sibh 'bhi maireann;
Creidibh mise da-rìreadh
Nach 'eil ni air an domhan
A bheir sonas gu bràth
Do shliochd Adhaimh air thalamh
Gus an creid iad an fhìrinn
Fuil na h-ìobairt 'g an glanadh,
'S gus an òl iad de 'n fhìor-aisg'
Chum an ìotadh a chasgadh.

"Laoidh do'n Ard-Bhuachaill," 44 lines; fonn—"Gu 'm a slàn a chì mi"

Tha mise so air m' fhàgail 's an fhàsaich air chuairt,
Ach deònuich do shàsan g am theàrnadh o thruaighe,
O Thusa, 'Thi 's ro-àirde 'tha theàrnadh do shluaigh
Thoir dhachaidh mi leat sàbhailt' gu tìr Chanaain shuas.

"Gràdh an Fhir-Shaoraidh," 42 lines; fonn—
"Tha còta-bàn, tha còta-bàn,
Tha còta-bàn air Fionnladh."

Co-Sheirm—Cum mo shùil ort, gun bhi dùinte,
Cum mo shùil ort daonnan,
Cum mo shùil ort, 'se mo dhùrachd
A bhi dlùth riut daonnan.

Thàinig Tu nuas o nèamh,
A shàbhaladh chlainn daoine,
Is thairneich iad thu suas ri crann,
Oir bha iad dall—'ad ghaol doibh.
Cum mo shùil ort, etc.

"Gaol Chriosd," 52 lines, to the air of "The Boatie Rows."

Co-sheirm—
Fanaibh dlùth rium, fanaibh dlùth rium,

Fanaibh dlùth rium daonnan,
Fanaibh dlùth rium auns gach cùis
Oir thug mi rùn is gaol dhuibh.

Ged a bhitheas an saoghal ribh a' strì
Le innleachdau 'ta làidir,
Ma dh' fhanas sibhse riumsa dlùth
Cha chuir mi cùl gu bràth ribh.
Fanaibh dlùth, etc.

This departure of composing hymns to popular airs is one that should be encouraged, as they are much more apt to stick to the listeners than ordinary hymn tunes that are neither so musical nor so often heard as the best of our slow songs.

All MacDonald's hymns are to secular airs, one especially good one—"Iarrtas an Fhìrean," 92 lines, to the air of "Macgriogair o'n Ruadh-shruth," and another, "Earail do Pheacaich," 120 lines, to the air of "Air faillirinn, illirinn, uillirinn o!" which seems to me very effective.

Co-Sheirm—Tha Iosa a' tighinn!
Grad bithibh 'n 'ur dùsgadh
Tha e tighinn mar bhreitheamh
A réiteach gach cùis,
'S mur dean sibh ris pilleadh
Is tighinn dha dlùth
Bithidh sibh air dheireadh
Is an dorus oirbh dùinte.

"An Comunn Nèamhaidh," 60 lines. Others are "Am Baile Dìon," fonn—"An té sin air am bheil mi 'n geall," 116 lines, May, 1882; "Toil an Fhìreau, 37 lines—Air fonn—"Is toigh leam an té dhìleas dhonn," Aug. 1884; and "Misneach agus seòladh do Pheacaich," fonn—"Hil ù hil ò hillin òro," 112 lines. Most of these hymns appeared from time to time in the *Oban Times*.

As a sacred poet John MacDonald, "Iain Dòmhnullach an Dall," deserves not to be forgotten, and I have much pleasure in helping to preserve his name among our clan bards.

AONGHNAS MAC DHOMHNUILL.

(ANGUS MACDONELL).

The subject of this sketch, Augus MacDonell, xxii. of Keppoch,* was a grandson of Barbara, daughter of "the gallant Keppoch," of "the forty-five," and of the Rev. Patrick MacDonald of Kilmore and Kilbride, the author of the famous collection of Highland airs published in 1784.

He represented the chieftainship from 1831 until the time of his death. He married Christina MacNab, of the MacNab's of Inishowen,

* His poems having been mislaid prevented his name appearing earlier.—K. M. M.

who was a grand-daughter of Charlotte, the youngest daughter of the famous hero of Culloden already mentioned, and, therefore, a second cousin of his own, by whom he had a large family. He was a very handsome man—tall, fair, well-knit together—and inherited some of the best traits of his distinguished ancestors. A staunch Jacobite, of course, and full of the ardour of his patriotic race he would have been an ideal chief, and no doubt if occasion had arisen during his time he would have been found "aye ready" for any emergency, and would have shown that the blood of the Keppochs had not in the slightest degree degenerated. He wrote several pieces of poetry, chiefly in a humorous or satirical vein, all of which, except one, have been mislaid or lost. He also saved some traditional papers relating to the family, which were in the possession of his uncle, John MacDonald of Inch, and who was on the eve of burning them a short time before his death. The specimen of his versification appended does not reproduce all he could have done. It was simply written one evening after dinner to create some amusement for his guests, among whom was the author of the subject for which the lines were written. The following are parts of the poem in question, being a reply to adverse criticisms on a prayer-book written by the Rev. Father Rankine, the priest at Badenoch, and after at Moidart.

"FATHER RANKINE'S PRAYER BOOK."

Ye critics spare your savage look,
Have mercy on poor Rankin's book,
What! though there's here and there a blunder,
Jaw-breaking words like distant thunder.
Know then, renown was not his aim,
Nor glory, yet, nor sounding fame,
Ye that see his faults too many,
His book was made to gain the penny.
Don't twit him with a deed so foul,
As gaining to his creed one soul,
Then critic spare his crippled verse,
To clink the "Geordies" in his purse,
In labour tossed, his infant brain
Conceived a thought brought forth with pain.
. . . . . .
And Rankin is a man of feeling,
Tho' Owen says he has been stealing
From leaves that lay on shelves for years,
Bronzed by the smoke that moves our tears;
Where the spider wove in peaceful toil,
Since Owen did possess the soil.
Poor insect he must shift position,
The subject now of inquisition;
The cankered worm his work traduced,
Behold the web he has produced.
M.A. is added to his name,
Not by merit—'tis pilfered fame.
Owen lost his title and his book,
The one he lent, the other Rankin took.
Curious that the title page
Didn't escape the critics rage:
All the notice that it claims
Is that it's wrong in all its aims;
And still we see it spreading wide,
Fast gaining ground on every side.
We wonder how this came to pass,
Yet no! behold Sir Hudibras;
A great brain turned topsy turvey,
When of his work we take a survey.
Verbs and nouns placed far asunder,
As Colossus' legs where ships sail under;
He spurned all rules of moods and tense,
Because they're used by men of sense.
From whence his words, that ill-spelt rabble,
Were they used at the tower of Babel?
A Gaelic book in broad Scotch idiom,
Like the hotch-potch that mortals feed on.
As changeable in confoundations
As the souls in transmigration;
No points or periods where they should
That would be given if he could.
Where'er there's doubt in prose or song,
He's always sure to take the wrong;
A tortured fancy groans a sound,
Like Titans fighting under ground.
. . . . . .
Who then put in his head that foible
Queen Bess' ghost with Cranmer's bible.
Lucre! the man pretends to scorn,
His book is bought like bill-reform.
The people stared with greedy look
Lured by the bait that hid the hook;
What motley crew of b-b-b-bastards
Were to their view on paper plastered;
Pandora's box sent out all evils,
But here they're back to fight the Devil;
For this he had some credit gained
Before he got them so well trained.
. . . . . .
His lines are all so out of measure,
That none can read them now with pleasure,
So very like the one that made them,
That none can doubt who ever read them.
To-day with something he's quite full,
To-morrow he is another's tool.
At times he is our Lord Protector,
And now, a Peter's pence collector.
A church he'll build, yet do not doubt it,
Some other view will drive that out yet;
A shining nature full of notion,
To find perchance perpetual motion,
That's found if he'd but take the trouble
To look but once in his own noddle.
One thing is grafted on his creed,
We will not pass it without heed,
So very like old Rothiemurchus,
Who, on the Spey, lived near his "duchas.'

Let what Bishop chose be in
He's Vicar of Bray—is Rankin ;
What more faults let others tell,
I shall bid him now farewell

One who could write the above on the spur of the moment must have had more in him that only required drawing out, some political excitement would have done it. Many of our best songs were produced during the Jacobite period, and it only required something of the kind to induce our author to cultivate the muses with greater success than the poem on the prayer book.

This sketch would not be complete without some mention of our poet's helpmate, who was left a widow with a young family at too early an age. Mrs MacDonell, who has battled with life nobly and cheerfully, is still hale and hearty—and long may she continue so. She has perhaps done more for Highland music than any other lady in the Highlands. She has preserved the best arrangements of many old Highland airs that otherwise would have perished, and improved others. Within the last thirty years she has been consulted by several arrangers of Highland music, and her stamp is marked upon the majority of their choice pieces—"Cailleach Beinn na Bric," "Crodh Chailein," "Tha Dhriùchd fhéin air barr gach meangan" (a fairy song), "Och nan och mo léir eràdh," "An nochd gur faoin mo chadal domh," "Bodaich nam brigis," "Struan Robertson's Salute," "Tha 'n cuan a' cuir eagal air clann nan Gàidheal," and several others in the "Gesto Collection of Highland Music" are her arrangements. Like the Gesto family in Skye, all her pieces are of the best, and nothing second-class is to be found in her repertoire, and she plays them all beautifully. Though her forte lay in slow airs, marches, and pibrochs, yet she was some years ago a powerful strathspey player. The writer never heard a better exponent of "Righ nam port"—the king of reels—the reel of Tulloch—and the prince of strathspeys, "Delvin side." It is no wonder, therefore, that such a talented couple should have a clever son and clever daughters, but more of some of them presently.

AILIS SORCHA NI' MHIC 'IC RAONUILL NA CEAPAICH.

(ALICE CLARIE MACDONELL OF KEPPOCH.)

Our famous and well-known clan bardess Miss Alice Clarie MacDonell, is the 8th and youngest daughter of Angus XXII. of Keppoch, and maintains the reputation of her clan and family, and illustrious ancestors from whom she inherited poetic gifts of a high order.

Ailis dhonn gur mòr mo ghràdh ort
Gruaidh na nàire 's beul an fhurain.

The founder of this brave, poetic, and war-like family of Keppoch, was Alastair Carrach* third and youngest son of John, first Lord of the Isles, by his second wife, the Lady Margaret, daughter of Robert High Steward of Scotland, who in the year 1370 ascended the throne of Scotland by the title of Robert II.

Several reasons have been alleged for the assumption of the surname MacDonell instead of MacDonald by this family. In MacIan's "Costumes of the Clans of Scotland," it is stated that Coll of Keppoch, the son of Gilleasbuig, who lived in the end of the seventeenth century, was the first who changed the orthography of the name to MacDonell by the persuasion of Glengarry, Lord Aros.

That's not likely, neither was any persuasion necessary, as according to the Black Book of Taymouth, his father, Archibald, signed his name MacDonell, and Donald Glas the second, signed Montrose's bond in 1665 (at Kilchuimen [Fort Augustus] to unite the loyalty of the Highlanders) as "Donald MacDonell off Keppoch." The patronymic of the family first was "Sliocdh Alistair Mhic Aonghuis," from Angus son of Alistair Carrach, down to the time of Raonull Mòr, when it became Mac-Ranald "Mac 'Ic Raonuill." Up to the time of Alastair nan Cleas, 10th Chief of Keppoch, they always signed "Mack Ranald" from the patronymic, then it was anglicised from MacDhomhnuill into MacDonell, which is nearer the Gaelic than MacDonald, which was derived from the Latin MacDonaldus, and in

* Curly headed and fair, "that is shawit Alexander sua that being the countries custome, because Highland men call it the fairest-hared and sua furthe, for this Alexander was the farest-hared man as they say of any that ever was," &c.

all subsequent documents the name and signatures are MacDonell.

Few families can boast of such a number of bards, both in the direct and indirect lines, and able ones too. The first of them was Iain Lom (and his son), entitled John son of Donald, son of John, son of Donald, son of Iain Aluin, the 4th Chief, was the most famous. Then we have Donald Donn, Donald Bane of the spectre, Alexander and Donald Gruamach of the house of Bohuntin, Rev. John MacDonald, "Ni' Mhic Aonghuis òg," grand daughter of Angus òg, fifth son of Alistair nan Cleas. A daughter of Donald Glas the 2nd, and sister of the brothers Alexander and Ranald, who were murdered. Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, his daughter Juliet, and his sons, Angus Odhar, and Alexander, and Coll, and several others, until we come down to the subject of our present sketch.

Miss Alice MacDonell was educated by private tuition, and at the convent of French nuns in Northampton, finishing off at St. Margaret's Convent, Edinburgh. She gave early promise of the bardic gift by stringing couplets together, and running about the romantic Braes of Lochaber, listening to wonderful tales of battles and chivalry, weird romances, fairy tales, Ossianic poetry, and lovely Highland music, all tended to foster the poetic talent, and lay the foundation of that intense patriotism and grand martial spirit which pervades much of her poetry, and which would have satisfied even Alistair Carrach himself. Besides her numerous accomplishments, Miss MacDonell is very well read in Shakespeare, ancient and modern poetry, history, and romance. For several years some of her poems have been published in various Highland papers, but they were not published in book form until 1896, when her "lays of the heather" appeared,† a goodly-sized book of 206 pages dedicated to Prince Rupert of Bavaria, the present representative of the Stewarts, containing 53 pieces of different lengths, and of a a martial, descriptive, and sentimental character. As might be expected her first poem is to her beloved native glen. "Lochabair gu Bràch" (Lochaber for ever), written for a historical work, entitled "Loyal Lochaber," by Mr W. Drummond Norie.

† Elliot Stock, 62 Paternoster Row, London.

In all thy moods I love thee,
In sunshine and in storm,
Lochaber of the towering bens,
Outlined in rugged form.
Here proud Ben Nevis snowy crowned,
Rests throned amid the clouds;
There Lochy's deep and silvery wave
A Royal city shrouds;
Whose waters witnessed the escape
Of coward Campbell's dastard shape,
Disgrace eternal reap:
Whilst fair Glen Nevis' rocks resound
With Pibroch Dhu' renowned;
From Inverlochy's keep.
Grey ruined walls, in after years
That saw the great Montrose,
MacDonald's, Cameron's, men lead forth
To victory 'gainst their foes.
Oh! Lochaber, dear Lochaber,
The rich red afterglow
Of fame that rests upon thy shield,
Unbroken records show.
"O, Lochabair, mo Lochabair fhéin gu bràth"‡

The next is "Lochaber's sons" (the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders) in which mention is made of the ties that existed between the Camerons and the Keppochs. Allan Cameron of Erracht's mother was a sister of the gallant Keppoch of the '45, and she it was who designed the tartan of the 79th, a blending of the colours of the MacDonald and Cameron tartans. Another significant poem is to the Clan Donald, on their first formation as a society since the '45, which breathes intense patriotism throughout.

Rouse ye children of MacDonald,
From each far and distant shore!
Hands outstretched across the ocean
Cling in fancied grasp once more.

Helpers of the weak and suffering,
As the knights of ancient lore;
Hearts that never knew dishonour
Beat as loyal as of yore.

Wake again, O great Clann Dhomhnuill!§
Let not duty call in vain;
In the vanguard of the battle,
Form your serried ranks again.

Miss MacDonell has been as successful in her choice of titles, as in the subject of her poems, and no one can go through the work without seeing that the author is capable of still greater things,

"The Highland Brigade," at the battle of the Alma, consists of 133 lines, is an excellent poem, and enough to rouse any Highlander's enthusiasm.

‡ Oh, Lochaber, my own Lochaber for ever.
§ The Clan Donald.

"The Bonnie Scots Greys" (second to none), is an equally fascinating poem; "The thin, red Line," and "The passage of the Gare," are likewise well chosen. "The Rush on Coomassie," "A Soldier's vow," "The Lad with the Bonnet of Blue," ‖ "The wearing of the tartan," "The spell of the mountains," "The plaint of the mountain stream," "Sunset," and many others are very good and reflect great credit upon the authoress, but she is not done yet. Since the "Lays of the Heather" was published the following further poems have come from her pen:—"How they won the Red Hackle" (about the 42nd); "Gillean an Fhéilidh" (the lads with the kilts); "The lassie wi' the tartan," "A Rùin," (term of endearment), "The Dream Glen," "Sea Dreams," "The Parting on the Bridge," "When Distant Hills Look Near," "Through the Zone of Fire" (Flora MacDonald), "The Doom of Knocklea," "The Taking of Abu-Hamed," "The Song of Sleep," "Never go Back," "Friendship," "Haunted," "The Dargai Heights," "Cill Charoil," "My Picture," "Parting," "On the eve," and several others not yet published. Some stanzas of one of the unpublished ones—"The Doom of Knocklea" are appended, "The Doom of Knocklea" (suggested by an incident in the Highland evictions.)

Whistle! for food in your eerie lone,
Gold Eagle of Cnoc-nam-beann!
Folds there are none, but the granite stone,
To steal for thy young on Cnoc-nam-beann,
The thatchless roof, and the ruined wall,
Will echo back to your hungry call,
No song in the sheiling, nor cow in the stall,
To tell of the kindly haunts of men
As the lonely winds sweep up the glen.
Ochon!

Whistle! and cry in your haunted cave,
Spirit of him who was called Knocklea,
Ye stand on the brink of an open grave
With the forms of the dead for company.
The red deer roams on the bare hillside,
No sound of life on the moorland wide
Ye scattered afar in the day of your pride:
Nor living nor dead, are ye lonesome then,
As the wintry winds sweep up the glen
And moan?

The ship went down as it left the shore,
Freighted with sorrowing human lives;
The waves brought back to thy castle door
Aged mothers and year-old wives.
Above the wail of the tempest's shriek,
The curse of the strong and the cry of the weak
Rose high o'er the blackened boulders peak,
For the ruined hearth and the empty pen
As the lone wind swept the evicted glen
Of the Dead!

Ye were strong as ye laughed in your cheerless mirth,
For the peasant lives who had perished there!
They wished to remain in the land of their birth,
Behold! how their God hath heard the prayer!
The gloom of the rocks on thy dwelling fell.
There is neither laughter nor tear in Hell!
Souls of the just with their God are well,
How fares it with thee in thy cursed den,
When the lone winds sweep the leafless glen.
O'erhead?

Whistle and cry to your hunting hounds,
The white Doe lies in the bosky park,
Whoop! and away, the dead man bounds,
For you are living and they are stark.
Fingers point to their grass grown homes,
Little ones weep on their own grave stones,
The forest echoes give back thy groans,
Till the tenantless walls are peopled again
With living children and lusty men.
Thy Doom!

Ware the river and haunted cave!
Ware the forests of dark Knocklea!
Ware the cursed where the pine trees wave!
Ware the torrent that tumbles free!
There evil walks in the train of night
With the man accursed in the day of his might,
Here men have perished in fearsome plight
Who answered the cry for the aid of men
That shrieks and raves thro' the wind swept glen.
In gloom!

Our clan bardess has also immortalised the heroic conduct of Brigadier Hector MacDonald at Omdurman in verse and song—"Our heroe's welcome" must be familiar to most Highlanders.

From the crash of cannons' roar
And the flash of ringing steel,
Toilsome march, and swift Bivouac,
Broken by the trumpets peal.
From the desert Afric's sands
Long renowned in battle story;
Omdurman's undaunted field
Where thy name is linked in glory.
*Ciad's ciad mile fàilte**

Dear to soldier's heart the laurels,
When a glorious deed is done;
Dearer when from grim oppressions
Broken chains, the wreath is won.
Dearer still, when hearts that love thee,
Honour in thy honours claim,
When the race of Conn united
To the world their rights proclaim.
Ciad's ciad, &c.

Set to music by Colin MacAlpin.

* A hundred thousand welcomes.

Maidens ! softly touch the clàrsach,
Sing your sweetest songs to-day,
Pipers ! rouse the magic chanter,
Loud Clan Coila's gathering play,
Clansmen ! pledge with Highland honours,
Highland cheer, our heroe's name,
Till the Highland hills re-echo
Back again our Hector's fame.
Ciad's ciad mìle fàilte.

Miss Jessie MacLachlan, the famous Scottish vocalist, sang the above song at the London banquet given to Colonel Hector MacDonald, which was set to music by Mr Colin MacAlpin.

Miss MacDonell's latest poem is "The mother land," extending to sixty-three lines, which has just been published, 1899, in the year book of the MacDonald Society. It breathes the same fervent patriotism so characteristic of many of her poems. The following quotation will give an idea of the poem as a whole.

"THE MOTHER LAND."

Upon thy kindly breast once more,
Heart to my heart, cheek to thy cheek, red lips
Of honey, scented heather bell, and myrtle sweet and wild,
Keening soft lullabys from out their mossy depths,
In the sound of the swift brown burns, and the winds
Lilting under the feathery fronds and the clustering leaves,
Trailing away down the rocky banks where the berries grow.

O ! but thou givest rest sweet mother land !
With thy cool delicate airs, and the songs,
The old time songs of the hills, Dearghull and Naoise sang
In their wattle hut by the side of the Etive loch,
Cuchullin sang in the far-off isle of the mists,
And Ossian sang away there by the fairy haunts of Treig,
Songs of the perfect life in the land of Atlantis out by the setting sun.

Miss MacDonell's last poem, published in the October number of the "Celtic Monthly," shows no falling off on her previous productions. It is in praise of the Paladin of the Soudan, "Major-General Sir Archibald Hunter, K.C.M.G., who so distinguished himself in the recent Soudan campaign, and who gained for himself not only the reputation of being one of the bravest of the brave, but a far higher and rarer quality, that of chivalry—by his mother's side a Graham, showing that he follows in the footsteps of those two knightly Paladins of his clan, Montrose and Bonnie Dundee." The first and last stanzas are quoted to give an idea of the poem.

1 Not mine the right thou gallant son,
Nor yet the skill to sing thy praise;
Till some more powerful hand shall wake
His tuneful lyre with polished phrase.
Some bard from out thine own clan Graeme,
So far renowned in Scottish fame,
His clansmen's deeds in verse portrays,
A sister Scot her right may claim.

5 Worthy of that brave clan art thou
That owned a Clavers, a Montrose,
Beneath their knightly banners furled
Thy name shall also find repose.
Nor courtly ways with these are sped,
Nor chivalry with these are dead,
So long as Scottish names disclose
One with such knightly virtues bred.

Our bardess is still singing away, and long may she continue to do so, a wish which, I am sure, the whole clan Donald will heartily endorse. "Gu m a fada beò thu 's ceò dheth do thighe."

JOSEPHINA MAIRI MACDONELL.

Another member of this talented family, Miss Josephina Màiri MacDonell, deserves mention here. Besides having composed the following poems—"The Highland Soldier's Return," "Cry from Lochaber pleading for Gaelic," "My Sprig of White Heather," and "A Message to the Braes of Lochaber," she contributed two articles on Prince Rupert, one in the *Celtic Monthly*, illustrated with his portrait, and one in the Clan Donald Journal, when he came over for the Queen's Jubilee. The London letter to the same journal, and the ladies' column for the *London Scot*, including numerous illustrations, amongst others one of Duneveg Castle in Islay, for Fraser MacIntosh's "Last MacDonalds of Isla"; "The Highland Brigade," for J. MacKay, Hereford, contributed to the *Celtic Monthly*; "The 79th Highlanders at Waterloo"; "The 72nd at the same battle"; "The Scots Guard at La Haye Sainte (Waterloo) or Hugoumont," "The Advance of Napoleon's Guard," "Wellington and some of the Highland Soldiers after Waterloo," "An Illustration for a Fairy Legend" by MacKay of the Gaelic Society, Inverness, also in the *Celtic Monthly*"; three battle scenes, viz., "Harlaw," "Bannockburn," and "Inverlochy," for the MacDonald History now in the press, several coats of arms, seals, and documents for the same work. For the "Lords of Lochaber" that partly came out in the *Celtic Monthly*," she also did

several illustrations for the Keppoch history—"Alastair Carroch at Inverlochy," "Iain Aluinn, the deposed chief," "The Escape of Sir James of Islay from Edinburgh Castle," "A View of Keppoch," one of "Tom Beag," of "Glen Roy," and the "Parallel Roads of Loch Treig," one for Alice MacDonell's poem, "The Recovery of the Tartan," when published in the *Celtic Monthly*. She also designed the invitation card for the London banquet to Colonel Hector MacDonald, and the Clan Donald illuminated address, both in the Celtic style. Being still young and full of Highland lore, we hope to see many more illustrations from her fertile pen.

The following are samples of her poetic powers, which are graceful and flowing and full of patriotic sentiment:—

A MESSAGE TO THE BRAES OF LOCHABER.

Backward, backward, all my longings,
Thought and memory still must flee,
Waking, dreaming, ever turning,
Dear Lochaber, back to thee:
Back to days of childhood's gambols
On the sunny braes at home,
Dancing to the eltin music
Heard among the river's foam;
Back to days when Keppoch echoed
To the music and the mirth
Of loyal hearts, we learned to value
At their true and priceless worth:
Back to days when sorrows shadowed,
Stealing round us like a pall,
Hills and woods and rushing rivers,
'Twas the hour to leave them all.
Then the clansmen of Lochaber
Gathering round us as of old,
While false friendships were so worthless
Showed that they were sterling gold.
Proved their leal unbought devotion,
Proved our trust was not in vain,
Bringing sweetness to that parting
Far outweighing all the pain.
Oh! sooner shall the raven's plumage
Change to white its swarthy hue,
Than we can e'er forget the friendship
That has proved so warm and true.
Dearer, nobler far, each peasant
Dwelling 'midst those lofty hills
Than e'en the mightiest men of Europe
Moulding nations to their wills.

And now there comes a loving message
From those bonnie heathery glens—
Homes of sweet pure-hearted maidens
And of staunch and trusty men—
Brightening o'er life's dreary pathway,
Like a gleam of sunny ray
Bursting through a wall of storm-cloud,
Chasing all the frowns away;
Telling that the tie between us
Is not one of yesterday
And still the chain of friendship rivets
Links that bind our hearts for aye.

But even here there lurks a shadow,
Why so many voices stilled?
Ah, day by day in Cille Choirrill
Some new grave is being filled.
Kindly hearts we've known and cherished;
One by one are laid to rest;
Alas! will *all* have left Lochaber
Ere we see it—God knows best.

Her "Cry from Lochaber pleading for Gaelic" is also very good, containing truth that cannot be gainsaid.

THE HIGHLAND SOLDIER'S RETURN.

Well had they fought in their country's cause,
On many a battle-field;
They stepped in each gap where a comrade fell,
Till the foe was compelled to yield;
In the posts of danger they ever stood
Like a rock that is lashed by the wave,
For under the tartan each heart that beat
Was a hero's—undaunted and brave:
It was they kept the Russian hordes at bay
Unbroken their "thin red line";
They made Britain's power on the Spanish plain
With unparalleled glory shine;
Foremost their ranks in the deadly fight
Ere they conquered at Waterloo;
They brought rescue and hope to despairing hearts
In the power of the dark Hindoo.
The noblest laurels round Britain's crown
Have been gained by their trusty sword,
They were worthy a nations grateful love,
Yet, what has been their reward?

Homeward their longing footsteps turn,
Back to their hills again,
They think of the welcome that waits them there,
And they reck not of all their pain;
The son will be held to the mother's heart,
As she blesses her noble boy,
And the girl he loves who has trusted long,
Will soon be his crowning joy;
The heather oft dreamed of in foreign lands,
Will bloom once again in their sight,
And each valley and wood and bubbling burn
Will bring them a new delight.
Then home—to Sutherland, Ross, Strathglass,
To Knoydart, the Western Isles;
Their hearts were light tho' their steps were slow
As they travelled the weary miles.

What is the welcome that meets them there
A silent and desolate vale!
The blackened walls of their ruined homes
That tell the pitiless tale.
Where is the father, the mother dear?
In God's Acre among the dead;
For thrust from their homes in the snow and hail
The wet ground was their only bed.
Their brothers, their sisters, the friends they loved
They were borne to their native shore
To live or die in the Western Wilds,
But their country shall see them no more;
And the antlered monarchs are browsing there,
Heather shelters the nest of the bird,
The badger may hide 'neath their vacant hearth
But no human voice is heard.

Let the free-born sons of the mountains go
The space is too narrow there,
The land of the fathers is for the deer,
For their sons there is none to spare!
Tell them that straths where hundreds have thrived
Have grown sterile all in a day;
And from fields that were golden with waving corn
The soil has all melted away;
What matters it then tho' their arms be strong,
Tho' their hearts be loyal and true?
It will bring more gold to the lord of the soil,
That his tenants be rich and few;
Some upstart American rents his land,
And fills up his greedy purse.
And he cares not tho' every coin is stamped
With a people's lasting curse;
His forests are bringing him longed-for wealth,
Each day increases his gain,
And who would weigh 'gainst the glittering gold
A few starving cottagers' pain?
So each fertile valley and picturesque glen
Are made desolate one by one!
But Britain! these deeds wilt thou sorely rue
Ere a few more sands have run.

Open your arms with motherly love
To each foreign vagrant that comes,
To render more dense the close foetid air
In congested London slums;
Give them a shelter and home and food,
Keep a welcome awaiting them all,
Tho' the city is swarming with hard working men
Who are starving within its walls.
When you want brave soldiers to fight your foes
Perchance you may find them there?
('Twill be useless to seek them in Highland glens
Cleared out thro' your generous care!)
And clothe them in tartan 'twere better so,
It has brought you a world-wide fame;
But see if the soldiers who wear it *then*
Will bring glory to Britain's name.

CRY FROM LOCHABER PLEADING FOR GAELIC.

"LEAN GU DLU RI CLIU DO SHINNSIR!"

Sons of the mountains awaken!
With hearts full of patriot fire,
And save, ere its beauty hath perished,
The language bequeathed by our sires.

We are proud of our peerless "Ard Albainn,"
Of each rugged pine-crested hill;
Yet, how can we say that we love her
And consent that her voice should be still.

For in Gaelic she breathed forth her melodies,
Bards caught the soul-stirring strain;
Whose echoes still play o'er heart-strings
In wild notes of joy or of pain.

'Tis Gaelic alone can interpret
The zephyrs that moan through her glens;
Or translate the hoarse voice of the cateract
Borne from the mists on her bens.

'Tis Gaelic that rings in the blue bells,
And heather that circle her brow;
'Twas Gaelic that sang thro' those forests
Where only the deer wander now.

'Twas Gaelic that laughed in the cottage,
As they danced after days spent in toil
In those homes, once the nests of contentment
And now of oppressors, the spoil.

And can we not hear in the wavelets
That babble along on the burn?
Like soft Gaelic words of endearment
That welcome some loved one's return.

Each dark heaving billow that dashes
Its foam 'gainst our rock-begirt shores;
Bears the rhythm of old Gaelic boat songs,
That measured the time for the oars.

The surf round our isles sobs in Gaelic
With tears it hath found o'er the main,
From Highlanders cruelly driven,
From lands they will ne'er see again.

Ye dream not—who ne'er have been parted
From home, and the friends ye hold dear;
What music hath each word of Gaelic
That falls on the sad exile's ear.

Our soldiers on red fields of danger
Hear it speak in the pibroch's wail;
And they conquer or die for their country,
With a courage that never can fail.

'Twas Gaelic that fostered the spirit,
Led our heroes to do what they've done;
Without Gaelic—that spirit must perish,
For its life and its language are one.

Ye who bravely are wresting your homesteads
From oppression's merciless heel
From oblivion—oh! rescue our Gaelic
That destroys more than tyrants' steel.

The voice of "Ard Albainn" is pleading,
Shall she plead to her children in vain,
Oft "Gualainn ri gualainn" you've conquered,
And for *her* you must conquer again.

There are some very pretty sentiments in "My Sprig of White Heather," some stanzas of which are appended:—

MY SPRIG OF WHITE HEATHER.

O! poor little sprig of heather
Thou hast been with me many a day,
But withered and dry are thy bonny bells,
And their bloom has all faded away.

So pure and white were thy flowerets,
All bathed in the dews of the morn,
When I bade my loved mountains a long farewell,
While with anguish my poor heart was torn.

Yet there's power in the shrivelled petals,
Sweetest music in every bell
That rings through my heart with wild magic tones,
And lays me under a spell.

I am borne on the wings of longing
To the hills of the Highlands again,
Where I see o'er the heather the tartan wave;
To my ear comes the bagpipes' strain.

I see the fair braes of Lochaber
In the halo of sunset glow;
And far away the blue mountain peaks
Wear their wreaths of eternal snow.

The breezes that blow through the birchwoods
Bear the perfumes of all the wild flowers
That grow where the woodbine and ivy green
Are twined into fairy bowers.

I can hear the rapid Roy chafing
'Gainst the rocks as it pours down the glen,

Its banks are all tangled with creeper and fern
That cover the wild otter's den.

Allt Ionndrainn in harmony murmurs,
Whilst the mavis its melody sings,
And far above through the evening sky
The trill of the lark clearly rings.

Once again thro' the heather and bracken
By the banks of the Spean I roam,
And hear "Eas na Smùide" as it thunders down,
And lashes the waters to foam.

Oh! how dear are the bonnie thatched hamlets
That gladden the face of each hill?
They shelter true gems, that are Scotia's pride,
For Highlanders dwell in them still.

I see their kind faces around me,
I can feel in the grasp from each hand,
A true noble heart, such as only beats
In our rugged, unconquered land.

But how sad Roy and Spean seem, wailing,
Near the spot where our old castle stood
With its plane-trees still bearing black scars of flames
Set by Cumberland's bloodthirsty brood.

My own loved home, I hear but the voices
Of strangers within thee to-day,
Dismantled and changed are thy ancient walls,
And thy children are far, far away.

Oh! Lochaber, to me thou are fairest
Of scenes where all beauties abound,
And from childhood's days 'mid stalwart sons
I have ever true friendship found.

Now the mist from the mountain falls o'er thee,
The vision that charmed me is gone;
And all that I see of Lochaber now
Is a sprig of white heather alone,

Having resigned martial compositions to her sister, the Clan bardess, other poems need not be quoted. Meantime we can only express the hope that she will not forsake the muses entirely, interesting as the sister art of painting may be.

Since the above was written her very interesting paper on "The Little People of Keppoch's Country," has been published in the Clan Donald year book of 1899, and the following poem, which has not hitherto been published :—

UNDER TONES.

The west wind, the west wind, among those giant trees,
Through birch woods and hazel, like sough of distant seas;
The whisperings and the sobbings 'neath the rushing ruddy streams,
A phiuthairag! don't we hear it? don't we hear it in our dreams,

Ah! m'eudail, ah! m'eudail, 'twas surely yesterday,
Two bairnies we nestled upon the grassy brae!
The lintie on the thornbush, the humming bees around,
As we listen to the music, the music underground.

The sunshine, the sunshine, how soon it fled away,
The glow upon the moorland was gone before the day!
Tears showered upon the heath-bloom, dark mists that hid the hill,
But m'eudail we hear it, we hear the music still.

How silent yon twilight!—the home—our home no more,
Chill, cheerless; how fearful, that sullen, bolted door,
The sombre, stirless, pine-trees, the wailing in the streams?
A phiutharag! a phiutharag! 'tis ever in my dreams.

MARTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MACDONELLS OF KEPPOCH.

As there is an intimate relation between poetry and music, love and war, I shall now enumerate the principal battles in which the MacDonells—(MacDonalds) of Keppoch were engaged. Having been remarkable for their poetic genius and martial achievements, I consider them to hold about the foremost place among all the MacDonalds, and to have been the most distinguished and most loyal family in the Stewart cause in the history of Scotland.

Beginning with the founder of the family, ALASTAIR CARRACH, youngest brother of Donald, Lord of the Isles, who was married to a daughter of the Earl of Lennox, and flourished from about A.D. 1380 to 1440-6 I shall briefly mention the principal battles in which they, and the people of the Braes of Lochaber, fought during the troublous times in which they lived.

1394*.—ALASTAIR CARRACH, 1st Chief of Keppoch, who in a deed of 1398 is styled "Magnificus vir et potens," became Lord of Lochaber. By order of his brother Donald, Lord of the Isles, of connection with a dispute about the Earldom in Ross, he laid waste the Valley of the Ness, and miles of country were devastated by the Lochaber men, and the Earl of Moray who governed the district found it necessary to make terms with Alastair Carrach on the 5th Sept., 1394, in which they bind themselves to support each other, and all the church lands and possessions of the Regality of Moray were put under the Lochaber chief's protection for seven years.†

1398.—Alastair Carrach seized the church lands of Kinmylies and took upon himself the partition of them.

1402.—He attacked and plundered the Canonry of Elgin, and burned the town, for which he afterwards made some amends, and some time after

* The Lochaber MacDonalds also fought at Bannockburn in 1314.

† See Loyal Lochaber, by W. D. Noric, pub. in 1893.

fought with his brother Donald against Angus Dubh MacKay, and had him taken prisoner. He was also a staunch supporter of his brother Donald, Lord of the Isles, in all his rebellions and difficulties.

1411 (July 25th).—He fought at the battle of Harlaw with Donald Lord of the Isles, after which he returned to his seat at Tom-a-Charraich in Lochaber.

1431.—On a given signal at the first battle of Inverlochy, Alastair Carrach, with his archers, broadswords (claymores) and Lochaber axes, made a tremendous charge against the enemy and swept everything before him like chaff before the wind. For the share he took in this rebellion he was dispossessed of his estates in Glenroy and Glen Spean, which were bestowed on Malcolm Mac-Intosh, Chief of Clan Chattan, and this led to a lasting feud between the Keppoch MacDonalds and the MacIntoshes which continued to the end of the seventeenth century.

1455.—Angus II. of Keppoch, called "Aonghuas na Feirte"—because he resided at Fersit—was with the army of the Isles under Donald Balloch harrying the coast of Ayrshire, burnt Innerkip, levelled Brodick Castle, taxed Bute, and wasted Cumbrays. The author of the "Comhachag" says he was as grand a character as Alastair Carrach.

1495.—Donald III. of Keppoch, after being forfeited with the historic Lordship of the Isles in 1493, submitted to James IV. at the Castle of Mingarry, Ardnamurchan, on the 18th of May, 1493. In 1496 or 1497 he was killed in a battle about the head of Glenorchy. The MacLarens of Balquhidder had made a foray into Brae-lochaber, and Donald with the Lochaber men turned out in force to revenge the injury done. The MacLarens sent to their kinsman, Dugald Stewart, 1st of Appin, to assist them, which he did, and the two chiefs, Donald and Dugald Stewart, fell by each others swords.

Iain Aluin IV. of Keppoch, from whom was descended the first poet in the family, viz., Iain Lom, was deposed by the clan for having delivered Donall Ruadh Beag Mac-Gille-Mhanntaich to MacIntosh, who was Steward of Lochaber. This man, little red Donald, had been giving the Clan Chattan some trouble in Badenoch, and when he was surrendered to them they hanged him to a tree near Clach-na-Diolta, Torgulben, at the end of Loch Logan, at the march between Lochaber and Badenoch.

Alexander V. of Keppoch was the second son of Aonghuas-na-Feirte. He was an old man when he succeeded Iain Aluin, and did not reign long as chief, so no stirring events took place in his time that has been recorded.

1503-4.—Donald Glas VI., and first chief of that name, married a daugher of Lochiel and resided at Coille-Diamhainn, or Torran-na-Ceap, within a mile of the present Keppoch house, till he built the castle (moated) on Tom-Beag, which was razed to the ground after the Keppoch murder in 1663. He joined the rising under Donald Dubh of the Isles in 1503-4.

1544.—Raonuill Mor VII. of Keppoch fought at Blar-nan-Leine, the battle of the shirts, in July 1544, with the MacDonalds against the Frasers, where Lord Lovat and his heir were killed. The MacDonalds won, but both sides were nearly annihilated. This was one of the fiercest battles ever fought in the Highlands. The combatants on both sides stripped to the waist, where Greek met Greek in real earnest. The survivors of this battle, where about 400 were engaged on either side, were 1 Fraser gentleman, and 4 common men, and 8 MacDonalds.

In a clan battle fought at Strathnaver in Caithness, where 1200 men were engaged, only 9 men returned from the field.

The battle at the North Inch, Perth, in 1393. Witnessed by King Robert III., the officers of state, and the nobility, between 30 MacPhersons and 30 Davidsons or Kays, to settle an old clan dispute, only one Davidson escaped, and the 11 of the Clan Chattan that survived were so badly wounded that they could not follow him. These were proper battles.

1547.—Raonuill Mòr was beheaded at Elgin. His son John Dubh, gille gun iarraidh, was progenitor of the poets, Donald Doun, Donald Bán, a Bhocain, &c.

1549.—Alexander Boloinne VIII. was the eldest son of Raonuill Mòr. It was during his time that the feud of Boloinne with the Camerons took place. He was unable to lead the Braerians, and his father being bed-ridden Iain Dubh had to take his place. It is alleged that he was a great favourite with the author of the "Comhachag‡" who says—

An cinn a' ghiùbhsaich 'na laidhe,
Tha nàmhaid na greighe deirge,
Làmh dheas a mharbhadh a' bhradain,
Bu mhath e'n sabaid na feirge.

The following stanzas from an old song commemorate the feud of Boloinne:—

Hó o hó na ha o hi
An d' fhidir an d' fhairich no'n cuala sibh,

‡ If the author of the "Comhachag" lived in the time of Alexander Boloinne it would make the famous poem 451 years old.

Hó o hó na ha o hi,
Mu'n luid nach toir cuisleach da gluasad air?

Bha gnothach beag eile mu dhéighinn Bholoinne,
'S gu'n innis mi soilleir 's an uair so e,
Bha creach Mac-an Tòiseich aig muinntir Shrath Lòchaidh
'S na gaisgaich Clanndonaill thug bhuapa i.

'S math is aithne dhomh 'n t-àite 's na choinnich na h-àrmainn,
Fir ùra a' Bhraghad 's an uair sin iad,
Bha iubhair Loch Tréig aig na fiùrain nach géilleadh,
'S bu shnnntach 'nan déigh fir Ghlinn-Ruaidh leatha.

Tha còmhdach air fhathast far am beil iad 'nan laidhe,
Gu'n robh iad mu'n sleibhtrich aig ianlaith an t-sléibhe
S na chaidh dhachaidh le sgeul diubh, bu shuarach e.

Ceann-feadhna air maithibh Iain Mòr Shliochd-an-tighe,
S ioma ceann bharr na h-amhaich a dh'fhuadaich e,
Ma's fhìor mo luchd-sgeòil-sa chuir e thairis air Lòchaidh,
Am beagan 'bha beò dhiubh 's an ruaig orra !

Alexander Boloinne died unmarried.

1564.—Raonull Og IX. of Keppoch, was the second son of Raonull Mòr, was progenitor of the houses of Fersit, and Inch. He assisted Glenorchy against the MacGregors and fought under King James V. till the battle of Solway Moss.

1579.—Ranald Og defended Glengarry against Argyll.

1591.—Alastair nan Cleas X., chief, married Janet MacDougall of Lorn and had 5 sons, 1 Ranald Og, 2 Donald Glas, 3 Alastair Buidhe, 4 Donald Gorm, 5 Aonghuas Og—progenitor of the Achnancoichans, and grandfather of "Nighean Mhic Aonghuas Oig," the poetess. At the instigation of Huntly he made a foray into Strathspey, seized the castle of Inverness, which he was soon obliged to evacuate. He fought in 1594 at the battle of Allt-Chuailleachain in Strathspey, or near Ballindallach.

1602.—He is mentioned in the Act ordaining a levy of Highlanders to assist the Queen of England in her wars in Ireland.

1615.—In conjunction with his son Raonull Og, and the eldest son of Mac Mhic Ailein, assisted Sir James MacDonald to escape from Edinburgh Castle, Raonull Og using a false key, and accompanied him through the Isles to Ireland, and assisted him in his rebellions.

1616.—Commission was given to Lord Gordon for the seizure of Mac Ranald and his son. In 1617-18 Alastair-nan-Cleas and his son Ranald escaped to Spain, and in 1620 Alastair was recalled from Spain and received a pension of 200 merks sterling.

1640.—Angus Og, son of Ranald òg mortally wounded at the battle of Stron a' Chlachain, was carried to Corracharamaig where he was killed by the enemy, who discovered his whereabouts.

1645.—Donald Glas XI., chief, was the second son of Alastair nan Cleas. He invaded Argyll in 1644 and was at the 2nd battle of Inverlochy where the MacDonalds were again victorious. He was forfeited for the part he took in the battle. He married a daughter of Forrester of Kilbaggie in Forfarshire, and had two sons, Alexander and Ranald, who were the subjects of the Keppoch tragedy. His daughter was the authoress of "Cumha Ni' Mhic Raonuill."

Alexander XII., murdered along with his brother in 1663.

1653.—Alastair Buidhe XIII.—Chief and third son of Alastair nan Cleas joined the Earl of Glencairne's rising. The general belief in Lochaber is that he was innocent of the murder of the Keppoch brothers, but that his son Ailein Dearg was guilty.

1675.—Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich XIV. was a famous poet as well as chief. He married a daughter of MacMartin of Letterfinlay, the oldest branch of the Camerons of Lochiel, by whom he had two sons and eight daughters. Coll, and Angus Odhar, and Alexander were poets, also Silis, the 4th daughter, who married Gordon of Baldornie in Banffshire and Kildrumnie in Aberdeenshire, ancestors of the Gordons of Wardons. The other daughters whose names are known were Mòr, Seonaid, and Catriona (Catherine) who married MacPherson of Strathanashie, one was married to MacLean of Kingairloch, one to MacIntyre of Glenoe, one to Campbell of Barcaldine, one to MacLauchlan of Castle Lauchlan, one to another MacLauchlan and one to MacDonald of Glencoe who was massacred in 1692. Gilleasbuig was educated at Forres. In September, 1675, he joined Glengarry and Lochiel when they went to Mull to assist the MacLeans against Argyll, on which occasion the following verses were composed by a "witch wife" who promised the MacLeans that as long as she lived the Earl of Argyll should not enter Mull.

Chorus.

Hi haori ri iù,
Hiri am boho hug éile
Chall oho hi iù.

Chunnacas long seach an caolas
Hi haori ri iù etc.

Ceart aogasg Mhic-Cailein,
Chall oho hi iù.

Ach gu'n caisg an Righ Mòr e,
Hi haori hi iù,
Hiri am boho hug éile,
Chall oho hi iù.

Ma tha Dubhart air aire
Chall oho hi iù.

Guidheam tonn thair a tobhta,
Hi haori hi iù,
Hiri am boho hug éile,
Chall oho hi iù.

Dh'fhiach an tog dheth 'marachd
Chall oho hi iù.

He was one of the chiefs who had to present themselves at Inverlochy in 1678. He was a poet of great ability, composed a number of excellent songs, and died in 1682.

1685.—COLL XV., chief, was only 18 years of age when his father died, and he was taken home from the university of St. Andrews. In the year 1685 he joined the Duke of Gordon, the Marquis of Athole, and Lord Strathnaver, when they invaded Argyll. He took the castle of Ruthven, besieged the castle of Inverness and plundered the town, for which he was ordered to restore 4000 merks to the burgh. He also fought the last clan battle, viz., the battle of Mulroy, near Keppoch in 1688, against the MacIntoshs, and was, as usual with the MacDonalds, victorious, and took MacIntosh a prisoner (and where MacKenzie of Snddie was slain).

1698.—He fought at Killicrankie, and in 1715 he fought at Sheriffmuir where he routed the English cavalry. He married Barbara, daughter of Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat, and died about 1728-30.

1745-46.—ALEXANDER XVI. "the gallant Keppoch of the forty-five," fought in all the battles of that disastrous campaign, also at Sheriffmuir with his father Coll, and was killed at the battle of Culloden, April 16th, 1746. His brother, Donald, was also killed at the same battle. He had been 10 years in the French Army, and was esteemed one of the best officers in the service. He commanded the clan in 1745, and it was on his advice that the Jacobite army gave battle to "Johnny Cope"* at Prestonpans, and on all critical occasions during the campaign his advice was eagerly sought for. He knew the country well, and what the clans could do. This is borne out in the account of Keppoch's nephew, Donald, who was executed at Kennington in August, 1766. This latter was one of the pluckiest in the whole Jacobite Army though only 20 years of age. Alexander of Keppoch and Gillies MacBain were the grandest heroes of the campaign.

* Sir John Cope.

1759.—RANALD XVII., a major in Frasers Highlanders, fought at the siege of Quebec under Wolfe and the other battles in the American campaign. He married Miss Cargill of Jamaica, and died before 1798. He was buried on the top of Tom-Aingeal in Cille-Chaorraill, Lochaber.

1793.—ALEXANDER XVIII. was a major in the Royal Scots, who died unmarried. He fought at the siege of Toulon, at the battle of Aboukir, where he was wounded, and in the Peninsular War.

1809.—RICHARD XIX., a lieutenant in the Gordons, also died without issue. He fought at Walcheren, Orthos (where he was wounded), Quatre-Bras, and Waterloo, where he was also wounded.

CHICHESTER XX. of Keppoch, was a son of Major Alexander of the Glengarry Fencibles, was married, and had two sons who died without issue.

JOHN XXI. was another son of Major Alexander and died unmarried. This ends the male line direct.

ANGUS XXII. was a grandson of Barbara, daughter of Alexander of the "forty-five," who married the Rev. Patrick MacDonald of Kilmore and Kilbride, the 1st great collector of Highland airs, published in 1784. He married his cousin, Christina MacNab, a daughter of Jessie—Mrs MacNab of Garvabeg—and granddaughter of Charlotte, 6th daughter of Alexander killed at Culloden. There were some of Angus's poems in MS. which have been lost. A daughter of Patrick MacDonald's (Flora) also composed some poems, but they don't seem to have been preserved. Alice and Josephine, daughters of Angus XXII., are the last poetesses of the family.

DONALD XXIII., son of Angus, was a young man of considerable ability. He had a great natural gift for caricaturing, and would undoubtedly have become distinguished in that line if he had lived in one of our large cities. He had three favourite subjects well known to the writer of this article for practising his ingenuity upon, and he portrayed their several weak points to perfection. One passing glimpse was enough for him to delineate every feature in one's countenance, and if there were a weak point in it it was sure to have a prominent place in the picture. He preferred, however, a colonial life, and died unmarried in Australia in 1889. Of this distinguished family it may well be said :—

"Gone are the gallant hearts that kept our foes at bay,
And gone the Highland broadswords that gleamed in battle day,
Our friends are dust, their swords are rust, and we lament in vain,
For Scotland can never be old Scotland again."

Regarding the chiefship of the MacDonells of Keppoch, the clan always reserved to themselves the right to have a say in the matter, as witness the case of Iain Aluin, who was deposed, irrespective of the question of succession in the male, or female line. The Brae Lochaber people regarded the late Angus MacDonell XXII, who was doubly related to the hero of Culloden, as head of the house of Keppoch, and representative of the chiefs, and being in possession (though not as a proprietor) he was the man whom the clan would have followed in an emergency. And they were equally emphatic regarding his son Donald, for when he first left home to seek his fortune in a foreign land, the whole of the Braes men went to see him off at five o'clock in the morning, and men of iron frame were shedding tears over the severance of the last link that bound them to the house of Keppoch, a chieftainship that existed for more than five hundred years, and when he visited them for the last time all the people turned out again to receive him, gave him a grand ball, and had bonfires on the hills to welcome him, which they would not have done if they had not considered him "Ceann an taighe." The late chief of Chisholm, and the MacIntosh, chief of Clan Chattan, claim through the female line.

ADDITIONAL MATTER REGARDING THE KEPPOCH AND SOME OTHER LOCHABER BARDS.

SILIS NI' MHIC RAONUILL.

This is the proper place to mention that there has been some confusion with regard to Silis, Cicely, or Juliet MacDonell of Keppoch. On consulting the Keppoch family, I was informed by Miss Josephine MacDonell that she was undoubtedly, according to the family MSS. and tradition, a daughter of Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, and one of nine daughters, all handsome and highly educated for the time in which they lived, and had all been married to landed proprietors; Juliet was not married to a Fraser but to Gordon of Baldornie and Kildrummie in Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, and was known as Ban Tighearna Bhaldornie,* ancestress of the Gordons of Wardons who still keep up the relationship with the MacDonells of Keppoch. She suggests that there might have been another Juliet from Lochaber, a Cameron or a MacDonald, who married Fraser of Moràgach Mhic Shimidh. If she had been married to a Fraser it must have been a first marriage, of which there is no trace in the family MSS. or tradition. We are bound, therefore, to conclude that the account given of her in MacKenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry" is incorrect. At the same time it would be interesting to know what evidence MacKenzie had for concluding that she was married to a Fraser.

It was to her husband, Gordon of Baldornie and Kildrummie, that she composed her lament, and on account of whose death she nearly died of grief. It was also about this time that she fell into a trance of some six or seven weeks' duration, some say longer. Her husband is said to have fought at Killiecrankie and Sheriffmuir. The Keppoch family believe that some songs were attributed to her that she never composed. They hold that her tone was a high one from the beginning. Another of her songs is "Oran do Dh' Fheachd Mhorair Màr, 's a' bhliadhna, 1715," in which she sends her compliments to MacDonald of Sleat, and his brothers, James and William, Alastair liath—Alastair dubh of Glengarry—Ailean o'n Chuain—Allan MacDonald of Moydart—An Coileach—the Duke of Gordon—the Frasers, Lovat, Donnachadh, Duncan MacPherson of Cluny, MacKenzie, MacLeod of MacLeod, MacKinnon of Strath, Chisholm, and Keppoch, &c., a very fine song of 90 lines with six lines in each verse.

She also composed a song of 8 verses to Alexander MacDonell of Glengarry. It is said that she was living in 1724, the year that Alasdair Dubh of Glengarry died, and that she also survived Lachun Mac Tearlach Oig, who died in 1734.

The following hymn by Silis, composed after she came ont of the trance, was taken down by Miss Josephine MacDonell from Archibald MacArthur, Fort Augustus, in September, 1899.

Dìth do bheath', a Mhoire Mhaighdean,
'S gile do mhac na 'ghrian,
Rugadh e Mac an aois 'athar,
Oighre fhlathanais g' ar dìon;
'S iosal an ceum 'thug ar Slànaidhear
'Rinn tearnadh a Pàrras gu talamh,
Gun aon àite dha falamh.

'S aoibhinn an sealladh a fhuair i

* Variously spelt Baldornie or Beldornie. The Rev. Mr John Michie of Dinnet and Mr J. Davidson, Aberdeen, two excellent authorities, say that Baldornie Castle is in Banffshire, and Kildrummie in Aberdeenshire.

'Nuair a thàinig e as a colainn,
'Ga shuanadh ann anartan bàn,
Ar Slànair thàinig gu ar fuasgladh ;
Cha d'iarr Mac Righ na h-uaisle
Cusan, no cluasag, 'na leubaidh,
Ach gu'n a thuit dha mhàthair
Cur 'n a " mhangair" e 'na chadál.

Cha d' iarr Banrigh na h-ùmhlachd
Uir ach 'na ùrnais 'na seòmar,
Cha mhò dh' iarr i mnathan-glùn,
Ach Righ nan dùil a bhi g'a còmhnadh,
'Shoillsich rionnag 'san adhar,
Rinn e rathad do na trì righean,
Thàinig iad 'na ionsuidh
Le gaoil, gràdh, 's le faoilte firinn.

Chruinneadh na buachaillean bochd
'Ghabhail fradharc oirre 'san tim sin,
A' cur nàisneachd 'san lag 's an làidir,
'S gu bhi cho dàn air an Righ sin ;
'Nuair ghlac Herod 'an àrdan
Air an Slànair thighinn gu talamh,
Cha d' fhàg e mac a bh' aig màthair
Gun a chur gu 'bhàs le 'an-iochd.

Thairg iad e suas anns an teampull
Mar bhitheadh gnàth le chloinn Israel,
Bha e air 'aithnichinn gu'm b'e ar Slànair
Le Ana agus naomh Shimeon ;
Rinn iad t' àrach, agus t' altrum,
'N àite athair agus màthair,
Theich iad leat do'n Eiphit
Bho Herod 'bh' air do thòir.

'N àm 'bhi tilleadh dhachaidh
'S a bhi caitheamh na slighe
'Nuair a sheall iad mu'n cuairt daibh
Tra dh'ionndraich bhuap' am Messiah,
'S iad a bha brònach duilich
Tra nach b' fhurasda dhaibh 'fhaotainn,
Miad 's a rinn iad 'ga thuireadh
Cha robh an gnothach ach faoin leo.

Ach àm dhol deiseal an teampull
Chualas còin gu beathail
Measg nan doctairean teagasg,
'S bu deas a thigeadh a labhairt ;
Sin tra thubhairt a mhàthair,
" Ciamar a thàineadh dhuit tighinn ?
'S tursach a rinn thu ar fàgail
Na trì latha 'bha sinn 'g ad shireadh."

A mhàthair, na biodh oirbh mulad
Ged a dh' fhuirich mi 'san teampull ;
Seirbhis m' athar anns na flaitheas,
'S fheudar feitheamh anns gach àm dhi,
'S ioma fuachd agus acras
Siubhal is seachran tiamhaidh
A tha agamsa ri fhulang fhathast
Mu'n téid mo ghnothach gu finid.

Théid fhathasd mo bhaisteadh,
'S fulangaidh mi traisg anns an fhàsach,
Fulangaidh g'am naimhdean 'gam bhualadh
Ann am buaireadh 's am pàisan ;
Fulangaidh mi breth agus binn
'S mo dhìteadh le fianuis bhréige,
Seallaidh mi gu h-umhal iosal
Ged a phian iad mi 'san eucoir.

Rinn e anns a' ghàradh ùrnaigh
'Chuir gu dlùth air fallus fala,
Dh' fhuilig e rithisd a sgiùrsadh
'S an crùn a chur air gu daingean,
Chuir iad e bho Philate gu Herod.
Ag innseadh gach sgeul mar a b'àill leo,
'S tra nach d' fhuair iad mar bu mhath leo,
Chuir iad deise do dh' anart bàn air.

Thilg iad smugaid 'na aodann,
'S bhuail iad e anns gach taobh le'n dòrnaibh,
'S ghiùlain e an Crois air a ghuaillean
Suas gu cnoc Chalvary ;
Dh' fhuilig e sleagh chuir 'na thaobh
Tàirnean 'na làimh 's 'na chasan,
'S ghlac e an cup 's an robh an t-shearbhag
Beagan mu'n d' fhàg an anail e.

Thug e mathanas dha naimhdean
'S liubhair e do'n Ard-Righ 'anam,
Thug iad sin bhar a Crois e
'S liubhair a chorp g'a mhàthair ;
Chaidh a nigheadh 's a chàradh
Mar bu ghnàth le 'thìreadh ;
Tha dòruinn bàis air dol seachad
Dìth do bheatha, a Mhoire Mhaighdean.

There are other versions of the same hymn. The version given in the Rev. Allan MacDonald's collection, " Laoidhean Spioradail," consists of fourteen stanzas.

The following fragments are from another poem of Silis, after losing her husband and daughter.

A' cheud disathuirne a bha dhiubh
Chuir mi Ann anns an ùir,
'N a dhisathuirne 'na dhéigh
Thug mi liubhairt do Mhac Dhé
'Us m' fhear-an-taighe bhuam.

Thug mi liubhart ga mo ghaoil
Measg nan aingeal 's nan naomh
Far an gabhadh iad caomh riut
Ann am flaitheanas.

'S tric a shuidhe thu aig mo cheann
G' am faicinns' leth bheò,
Thu nach cunntadh stòras a
Chlòthadh rium, etc.

KEPPOCH SONGS.

" Moladh do Fhear na Ceapaich 's do'n phìob," by Iain MacAilein, is a song of 64 lines, the first stanza of which is—

'Ghillcasbuig, mo bheannachd ri m' bheò
Dh'fhear aithris do ghnìomh,
Bhrigh os ceann na chual thu de cheòl,
Thug thu'n t-urram do'n phìob ;
Cha chuala luchd-teud sgainneil do bheòil,
'S tu 'bu ro-mhath g'an dìol ;
Ach gu'm b' fheàrr leat ealaidh a bhrosnachadh slòigh
Na sochair gach sith.

And alongside it may be placed "Moladh na Pìoba† le Fear na Ceapaich."

'S mairg a dhi-mhol ceòl is caismeachd,
Brosnadh slòigh gu gaisge thréin
Mòr-phìob leis an dùisgear gach misneach,
A torman mòid is misde beum.

Mo ghaol clàrsach, ro-ghaol pìob leam,
Miothlachd leam an ti do chàin ;
'S olc an duais da ceòl droch chomain,
'M bounaibh chluas aig ollamh ri dàn.

Cha bhi mi di-moladh an dàin,
Ach 'sann 'bu mhath an dàn 's an t-sìth,
An nàmhaid cha deachaidh an dàn
Riamh cho dàn 's a chaidh a' phìob.

Na'm faiceadh tu fir air an leirg
'Fo mheirghe 'am bi dearg is bàn,
B' fheàrr leam spealtadh dhi ri uair
Na na bheil gu tuam de dhàin.

Bu bhinn leam torman a dos,
'S i 'cruinneachadh airm fo sgiort ;
An dàn nan tigeadh fo 'brat
Gu ceart gu'm b' fheàrr leath' bhi 'n Iort.

'Bhean bhinn-fhaclach nach breun sturt,
Chiùin, chiùin-fhaclach 's mòr bhreug sin,
'Labhras gu sèimh air gach magh,
'S a bréid air sleinneinibh a fir.

SONG TO CATHERINE OF KEPPOCH.

The following stanzas are from a long song composed by Lachlan MacPherson of Strathmashie. The subject of them is "Caitir Bhàn," or Fair Catherine, evidently Catherine, daughter of Gilleasbuig XIV. chief of Keppoch,‡ and sister to Silis the poetess, whom he afterwards married. The poet tells how deeply he himself is in love with her. She has among her admirers Mr Duncan, the minister of the parish, and his assistant, Mr Martin. The former rests his hope of being the successful suitor on account of his professional position as superior in office, the latter on his personal appearance. A keen contention having arisen between the clerical rivals as to which of them has the better claim to the hand and heart of the fair Catherine, the poet happening to come the way at the time promises that unless another suitor, who is for the present beyond the seas, returns home, she will never be taken from them. He accounts for the great admiration in which Catherine is held by describing her several accomplishments and uncommon personal attractions.

Mìle fàilt air Caitir Bhàn !
Am bheil thu 'd shlàint a' mairsinn ?
O'n a dh'fhàg mi thu air àiridh
Ann an Gleann na Pataig ;
Riamh o'n là sin, ged bu nàr e,
Cha robh càileachd agam,
Cha'n fhaighinn cadal no pràmh
Gun thu 'bhi teann 'am glacaibh

'S tu 'thog an aimhreit ann mo cheann
A chuir air chall an t-acras,
Cha'n'eil meadhail dhomh ach gann
O'n a theann mo bheachd ort ;
Cha'n'eil léirsinn, cha'n'eil géireid,
Cha'n'eil feum no taic annam,
'S ged bhiodh agam spionnadh cheud
Gu'n chuir mo spéis dhuit as da.

'S mòr an sàrachadh mar tha mi
Anns gach là air m' aiseag,
Tuirseach trom, 's mo chridhe fàs,
Ag iarraidh blàthais air Caitir,
'S mòr taic do chàirdeas féin a mhàn
Mo shlàinte air a h-ais dhomh,
Cha leighis sagart mi no pàpa,
Ged robh gràsan aca.

'S lughaid a tha dhomsa nàire
Gràdh a thoirt do Chaitir
'S na daoine 's cràbhaich' anns a' bhràighe
O cheann ràidhe glact' aic'
'S mòr an call 's an seòrs' a th' ann
Mur dean iad sampuill cheart dhuinn,
'S gur iad a chàirich air an ceann
Na chuir fo cheannsal peacadh.

Maighstir Donncha 's Maighstir Mairtin
Air an sàradh aice,
Chosdadh fear dhiubh searmon Ghàelig
Ri aon ghàir 'thoirt aisde ;
Thuirt Maighstir Mairtin, "'S tusa 's gràinnde
'S i mo làmh-s' a ghlacar" ;
Thuirt Maighstir Donnach, "Tha thusa meallta,
'S mise 's àirde facal."

Meòir a 's grinne, làmh a 's gile,
Nach bi milleadh anairt,
A siosar daor 's a snàthad chaol
Ni 'n gréim nach sgaoil air chabhaig ;
Thug Nàdur caoin gach gibht mhaith saor,
Tha 'm faolum ud barraicht',
Cha'n'eil barr aobhachd, caoimhneis, daonnachd,
Ann an aoraibh aingil.

There are other six verses equally good, and another long song by the same author of 64 lines to his lady-love, and though he does not mention Catherine by name, it was probably composed to the same individual. He imagines the condition of the man who could call her his own would be truly enviable. If he were that man he would be careful to behave in such a manner as would be worthy of her, and confesses that any description he can give of her and her excellent qualities is altogether inadequate.§

† A reply to Niall Mòr Mac Mhuirich who composed a song in dispraise of the pipes.

‡ Celtic Magazine for 1879, p. 317.

§ Celtic Magazine, 1879, p. 146.

NIGHEAN MHIC AONGHUIS OIG.

Besides consulting the family tree Miss Josephine MacDonell, Keppoch, informs me that Nighean Mhic Aonghuis Oig was a granddaughter of Aonghus Og, fifth son (not fourth son as alleged by some) of Alastair nan Cleas and progenitor of the Acha-nan-coicheans.

The Rev. Mr MacLean Sinclair, however, maintains that "she was not a descendant of Keppoch, but of Celestine of Lochalsh, and was a daughter of Aongus Og, son of Angus, son of James, who was the first of Ach-na-Coichean." He further says that the family to which she belonged was known as "Sliochd an Iarla." One of the family, Angus MacDonald, known as Aonghus Mac Gilleasbuig went to Nova Scotia in 1830. The writer in the meantime holds by the family tradition of the Keppochs.

Mr Alexander MacDonald, of Ridge, Altigonish, from whom Mr MacLean Sinclair derived a good deal of information, is intimately acquainted with the history, tradition, and poetry of the MacDonalds of Keppoch. He is a son of Allan MacDonald, mentioned in the Glenbard collection, p. 216. His father composed a number of songs; so has the son, besides being a good singer of all Iain Lom's songs, and an excellent performer on the violin.

Oran Do Dh' Alastair Domhnullach, Mac Raonaill na Ceapaich, a bha 'na oifigeach anns an arm, Le Padruig Caimbeul (Para Piobair).‖

Ged is fad' tha mi'm chadal
'S mithich dhomh a bhi dùsgadh;
Gur h-e dh' fhàg mi fo airsneal
Ceannard feachda na dùthcha
'Bhi gun oighreachd aig baile,
Bho 'n a chaidh thu a d' dhùthchas,
Ach na robairean meallta,
'Gabhail foill air gach taobh dhiot.

8 verses, 66 lines.

ADDITIONAL MATTER CONCERNING DONALD DONN.

Some stanzas by Donald Donn to the "Nighean donn bha an Cataobh," already mentioned in Donald Donn's sketch. He went for a creach (cattle raid) to Sutherland, and carried off a young girl with him, the daughter of the man he pillaged, but, having left her in charge of one of his companions, she managed to escape while her custodian slept—

Thogainn fonn gun bhi trom
Air nighean donn 'bha 'an Cataobh,
Gruagach òg a' chuil duinn
Dh' éireadh sunnd orm ri t' fhaicinn.

Latha dhomhsa 'bhi siubhal bheinn
Falbh gu traing togail creachan,
Thachair ormsa an gruagach dhonn,
Bun nan tom 'buain nan dearcag.

Théid mi sìos 's théid mi suas,
Bheir mi ruagadh do'n chaoil Chataobh,
'S ged bhitheadh taidhe roimhe cheann choill
Bheirinn pàirt do'n chrodh bhreac leam.

'S iongatach leam do dhuine còrr
'S mòran stòras a bhi aige
Nach robh beurla ann ad cheann
Agus dannsa ann ad chasan.

There is another version of this song, so it is impossible now-a-days to say which was the original one.

Another song of his is, "Moladh a' Phiobaire," to Donald Campbell ("Am Piobaire mòr"), who was piper to Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, and a nephew of the poet.

Beir an t-soraidh so bhnam
Do Ghleann Ruaidh le fear-eigin,
Gu buidhinn mo ghaoil,
'S iad nach saoilinn 'mhealladh orm.*

Chorus—

Hugoran o u e hò,
I ri ri hiag o,
Hugan o lail o,
No ho i ri ri hò ro.

48 lines, 4 lines in each verse.

Additional verses by Donald Donn, when he was taken prisoner by the Laird of Grant:—

Bha Seumas Dubh ann air thùs,
Righ! bu làidir a dhùirn,
Chuir e Uilliam ri 'ghlùn 'san fhùran.

Bhitheadh am féileadh glé àrd,
Is bhiodh 'osain glé gheàrr,
'S biodag phiollach air àirde na cruachainn.

'S ioma maighdean ghlan ùr,
'Chluinnt' farum a gùin
A chuireadh na crùn g'am fhuasgladh.

Gu bheil té dhiubh 'an Strathspey,
N'an cluinneadh i mo sgeul
Gu'n cuireadh i ceud glé mhath ann.

Another song attributed to him is in the form of a "Luinneag," published by Mr William MacKenzie in the "Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness," p. 57, Vol. VII.; but it's hardly equal to his other songs.

‖ Probably Major Alexander XVIII. of Keppoch. From the Glenbard Collection, p. 129.

* The air of this song was kindly sent to the writer a few days ago by Mr Alexander MacDonald, Ridge, Nova Scotia.

Another song also attributed by some to Donald Donn is "Oran an Amadain Bhòidheich," in which he is supposed to have mistaken his lady-love, a beautiful girl, who was dairymaid to his father, for a duck swimming upon the river and shot her by accident, having been deceived by his mother, who wished to put a stop to his amour. The girl is said to have been bathing in the river, and on his mother informing him that she saw a beautiful duck upon the river, he took his gun and soon turned his love into mourning. Such a thing is possible in the dusk of an evening, but it savours strongly of an improbability. The song, however, is a good and romantic one, as will be seen by the following stanzas :—

A Mhairearad òg 's tu 'rinn mo leòn,
Gur cailin bhòidheach lurach thu,
Gur guirm' do shùil na maduinn dhriùchd,
An dearc air chùl nan duilleagan.

Gur guirm' do shùil na maduinn dhriùchd
An dearc air chùl nan duilleagan ;
Gur gil' thu 'ghràidh, na'n sneachda bàn,
A' cur air àrd nam monaidhean.

Och, 's i mo mhàthair 'rinn an call,
'N uair chuir i 'shealg na tunnaig mi !
'S 'n uair a ràin' mi 'n linne chaoil,
'S ann bha mo ghaol a' siuthladh innt'.

'S e 'n gunna caol a rinn mo leòn,
Cha téid e òirleach tuillidh leam,
'S a' thé 'rinn dhomh-sa léine chaoil
Cha dean thu, 'ghaoil, gin tuille dhomh.

O Righ nan dùl, cum rium mo chiall,
Cha robh mi riamh 's a' chunnart so !
'S a Mhairearad òg 's tu rinn mo leòn,
'S tu 'dh' fhàg fo bhròn 's fo mhulad mi.

The writer is of opinion that this song must have been confounded with his song to the laird of Grant's daughter, composed the night before his execution, or by some other person who copied Donald Donn's style.

Another "Moladh a' Phìobaire," to Donald Campbell, piper to Gilleasbuig na Ceapaich, by Donald Donn :—

Slàn iomradh do m' ghoistidh,
Beul nach loisgeach 'an cainnt.
Slàn iomradh, &c.

Mo rùn air Caimbeulach suairc,
A théid air ruaig thar a' mhàim.

Mo rùn air Caimbeulach siobhalta
Nach cosnaicheadh càrn.

Gura math 'thig dhuit triubhas
Gun bhi cumhan no gann.

'S cha mhiosa 'thig dhuit osan
'S bròg shocair bhuinn sheang.

Bròg bhileach nan cluaisein
Air a fuaigheal gu teann.

Nàile dh' aithnichinn thu romham
Dol an dòmhaltas blàir.

Bhiodh do phìob mhòr gu spreigeadh,
'S cuid de h-eagal air càch.

'N uair a chluinnion toirm t' fheadain
Nàile ghreasainn mo làmh.

Thugadh bean leat bho'n Bheinigich
'S an cluinnt' beucadaich mhang.

'S ro-mhath 'b' aithne dhomh 'n nighean
A bha 'cridh' ort 'an geall.

Anns a' ghleannan bheag laghach
'S ann 'bhiodh tu taoghal os n-àird.

DONALD GRUAMACH.

(GRIM DONALD.)

It is mentioned in the Glenbard collection that John MacDonald of Bohuntin had three sons, viz., —Alastair, Donald Donn, and Donald Gruamach. It would thus appear that Donald Gruamach was a brother of the famous Donald Donn. As a poet he was considered not much inferior to his better known brother. He and Iain Lom were on bad terms, and frequent passage of arms in the poetical line passed between them. Very few of his poems have been preserved, but those that have show him to have been no mean hand at versification. On one occasion at least he managed to make the famous bare John lose his temper badly, as shall be seen presently. The following was a dialogue in verse that passed between them :—

DOMHNULL GRUAMACH AGUS IAIN LOM.

DONALD GRUAMACH.

A bhean nam pòg meala,
'S nan gorm-shùilean meallach,
'S ann a tha mo chion-falaich
Fo m' bhannan do m' ghràdh.
A bhean, etc.

Cha'n'eil mi 'gad léirsinn,
Ach mar gu 'm biodh reul ann
An taic ris a' ghréin so
Tha 'g éirigh gach là.

IAIN LOM.

Air leatsa gur reul i,
'S gur coltach ri gréin i,
'S òg a chaill thu do léirsinn
Ma thug thu 'n éisg ud do ghràdh.

Boladh ùilleadh an sgadain,
De dh' ùrluinn na h-apa,
'S i 's cùbaiche faicinn
A tha 'n taice ri tràigh.

DONALD GRUAMACH.

Fios bhuam gu Iain Mapach,
Do 'm bu chéird a bhi 'gadachd,

Nach co-ion da 'bhi 'caig rium
Is ri cabaire bàird.

Am busaire ronnach,
Fear nam brusg-shùilean musach,
Cha 'n fhasa do thuigsinn
Na plubartaich càil.

Ged tha thu 'm fhuil dhìrich,
Nàile, cumaidh mi sìos thu,
Cha bhi coille gun chrìonaich
Gu dìlinn a' fàs.

Faigheal fìor dheireadh feachd thu,
Cha 'n fhiach le càch ac' thu :
Chaill thu d' ìngnean 's a' Cheapaich
'Sgrìobadh prais' agus chlàr.

IAIN LOM.

Fios bhuamsa dhuit, 'Ille,
Chaill thu dualchas do chinnidh,
Gu bheil thu air m'aire
Làn de dh' inisgean bàird.

Mi cho saor de na ronnan
Ri aon beò dhe do shloinneadh ;
Nàile, rinn thu breug shoilleir
Ann am follais do chàch.

Ma 's ann ormsa mar dhìmeas,
'Ghabh thu 'choill as a crìonaich,
Iarr an doire na 's ìsle
Bho iochdar do chlàir.

Mur bhi dhomhsa mac d' athar,
Is ann da 'tha mi 'g athadh,
Nàile, chuirinn ort athais
A tha fàisgte 'nad chàil.

In the next encounter with Iain Lom, Donald Gruamach seems to have had the best of it, as the former descended to abusing his adversary. Donald Gruamach spoke as follows of the famous John :—

Thugadh greis air Greumaich leat
Gu'n euchdan a chur suas ;
Is thugadh greis air Duibhnich leat,
'S air muinntir an taoibh tuath,
Cha'n fheil feum do Dhòmhnallach
Ri 'bheò 'bhi ort a' luaidh,
'S e donnal a' choin bhadhail† ud
'Dh' fhàg bodhar mo dhà chluais.

Iain Lom's reply has not been recorded in full, but the first line of it shows that his feelings must have been very bitter ; it runs thus :—

A shean chràidhneach mhòr nan smugaidean !

The rest would have been equally bitter and fully as offensive.

† Wandering dogs.

RESIDENCES OF ALASTAIR CARRACH, IAIN LOM, AND DOMHNULL BAN A' BHOCAIN.

The first residence of Alastair Carrach was at a place near Torlundy and Inverlochy, still called Tom-a-Charrich. There is a small hamlet there now ; it is on Lord Abinger's property.

Iain Lom's home was at a place called "Clachaig," between Tulloch and Moy, between the burn of Allt-a'-Chaorunn and Urachar, a short distance above the present high road. Old Mr MacArthur of Fort Augustus asserts that the charge of cowardice always preferred against Iain Lom was quite untrue. The reason that he never drew a sword in battle was because in his early youth he had the misfortune to kill his brother in a fray near Loch Tay, where the two brothers were on different sides, without either being aware of it. And when Iain Lom found his sword had pierced his brother's heart he vowed he would never again draw a sword in battle, and his refusal to do so on later occasions has been the only motive for ascribing cowardice to him, and the following verse of a song is quoted as proof of the correctness of the story :—

Mo sgrìob do thaobh Loch Tàigh,
Ged a dh' fhàg mi ann m' athair
Cha b'e sid 'rinn mo sgaradh
Ach an ailt 'rinn mo chlaidheamh 'am bràthair.

("Ad armean" another version says.)

In consequence of his activity in getting the Keppoch murderers brought to justice he made many enemies among their partizans, and was so much persecuted that he had to leave Lochaber and take refuge in Kintail, as already mentioned ; and when on his way back to his native country, he took ill and died at Càrn-a-Dhotaidh, now called Auchteraw, near Fort Augustus, and was taken to Lochaber and buried at Cille Chaorrill on Tom Aingeal, not in the place where Fraser MacIntosh placed his monument, which the Lochaber people say is the tomb of Domhnull MacFhionnlaidh, the author of the "Comhachag."

In Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair's edition of John Lom's poems it is stated, p. 10, that he viewed the battle from an elevated spot that overlooked the castle of Inverlochy, which was occupied by fifty of Argyll's musketeers, and in a letter to me he remarks that—

Dhìrich mi moch maduinn cheòraich
Gu bràigh, caisteal Inbhir-Lòchaidh,

Does not necessarily mean "gu mullach caisteal Inbhir-Lòchaidh," and refers to the memoirs of Montrose by Grant (London : Routledge & Co., 1858), page 221, wherein the following passage occurs :—"The castle of Inverlochy, &c., was occupied by fifty musketeers of the Stirlingshire Regiment. These were some of Argyll's men already mentioned."

DONALD BAN A' BHOCAIN'S RESIDENCE.

The site of Domhnull Bàn a' Bhòcain's house is just beside the burn called Allt-Laire on the Inverlair side of it, and a few yards from where the present Inverlair keeper's house now is, the site is quite plain there. It seems that he did not live at Monesie. It was another Bòcan that haunted Monesie, and the two seemed to get mixed in people's memories.

Mrs MacDonell, Keppoch, had often heard the story from her husband, Angus MacDonell XXII. of Keppoch, who had it direct from his own grandfather, Angus Bàn, Inch, who was present many times when the Bòcan molested Domhnull Bàn.

Some people in Lochaber assert that Domhnuill Mac Fhionnlaidh the author of the Comhachag, who lived at Loch-Treig, was a MacKillop ; but all his descendants fought under the Keppochs. The Keppoch old gamekeeper, Archibald MacKillop, Achluachroch, maintains that he is descended from the poet. He says he got his information from Donald MacIntosh, a noted herbalist, who lived at Bohenie, and was considered a most reliable Seanachie. He was generally known as Domhnull Mac Eoghan, and had a fund of old lore and songs which were unfortunately allowed to die with him.

Donald MacPherson of the Advocates' library, and author of "An Duanaire" got a good deal of his information from this Donald MacIntosh. Mr MacKillop says in corroboration of his assertion that Domhnull Mac Fhionnlaidh the poet was a MacKillop, that in Cille Chaorrill he was buried in the graves of the MacKillops. I do not know what truth may be in the above story, but it is believed, Miss Josephine MacDonell of Keppoch tells me, by some of the Brae Lochaber people. The writer, however, does not accept this story. Stronger evidence would be necessary, but it is only fair to record that some of the Brae Lochaber people believe in it.

MRS FRASER, CULBOKIE.*

Miss MacDonell of Ardnabie, near Ardachy, Fort Augustus, afterwards Mrs Fraser of Giùsachan and Culbokie, when a lassie in her teens astonished her lady companions by composing a merry song commencing thus :—

Cò chì, cò chì,
Cò chì mi tighinn ?
Cò chì ach Mac Phàdruig
'Stigh le braidh Ardnabie.

Cò chì. cò chì,
Cò chì. cò chì,
Cò chì ach Mac Uistean,
Lùb air a chùil bhuidhe.

Cò chì, cò chì,
Cò chì mi tighinn ?
'Shàr mac an duin'-uasail,
Teann suas is dean suidhe !

Some years after, she became the wife of Mac Uistean, the Laird of Giùsachan. There is also in Ranald MacDonald of Eigg's book an "Oran le fear Ardnabidh do dh' Alastair Mac Dhomhnuill," song by Ardnabie to Alastair MacDonald, of which the following is a stanza :—

A' cheud diluain do'n bhliadhna so,
Gu riaraichte 'bha m' inntinn deth,
'N ti mu'n robh mi iargaineach,
Bha iarrtas ro chinnteach dha ;
Do shlàinte 'bhi gun deireas
Bho'n là 'dhealaich mi 'san tìr so riut,
An déigh gach cùis a bhuadhachadh,
Do m' chluasaibh 's duais ro fhìrinneach.

It consists of 11 verses, 88 lines, and is evidently a fairly good song.

Then there is a marbhrann—death-bed elegy, "le mac fir Ardnabie ann an leabaidh a bhàis," by a son of MacDonell, Ardnabie, which runs :—

Dùisg, a choluinn, o do chadal.
Is fhad an oidhche dhuit do shuain,
Gun chuimhn' air an t-slighe mu'd choinne,
'S olc dhuit an comunn a fhuair ;
Comunn eadar thu 's an saoghal,
Cha bhaoghala chumail ceart,
Ma gheibh a' cholunn a sàth,
Bidh aithreachas 'an là nan leachd.

---

* Mrs Fraser had a large collection of O-sian's poems in MSS ; and was an excellent Gaelic scholar.

In this elegy there are 13 verses, or 110 lines; the poem, complete, is also in Ranald MacDonald of Eigg's book.

There is also a song entitled "Deoch-slàinte 'n oighre," to a member of the Glengarry family, composed by a local poet named John Kennedy. It is to be found in the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, vol. ix., beginning :—

Fonn (Chorus).

Olaidh mi deoch-slàinte 'n oighre,
S toigh leam fhìn e là 's a dh' oidhche
Struidh an eòrna, fear mo chaoimhneis,
S cha téid fheighneachd ciod ì 'phrìs.

'S mi gu'n òladh i 's gu'm pàidheadh,
Do 'n stuth chruaidh á cuach nan Gàidheal,
Olaidh sinn deoch-slàinte 'n àrmuinn,
Gu seasamh 'an àite 'linn.

Gur deas an Gàidheal an t-oighre,
Dòmhnullach cho àrd 's a sloinnte,
'S 'nuair gheibh e gu 'làmh an oighreachd
Théid na Goill a chur fo chìs !

There are other 9 verses in it equally good.

IAIN DUBH MAC IAIN MHIC AILEIN.

Iain Dubh Mac Iain Mhic Ailein, the bard, fought at the battle of Sheriffmuir and composed the following songs besides those already mentioned.

Oran do Mhac Shimidh Lord Lovat, who was beheaded in 1746 when in France, after 1715.

Oran do Mhac Mhic Ailein a Mharbhadh 'sa bhliadhna 1715.

Marbhrann do'n Mac Mhic Ailein, of 15 verses, 5 lines in each verse, 75 lines.

Cumha Chlann Domhnuill, 12 verses, 96 lines. All in Ranald MacDonald's book.

He also composed "Oran do dh' Aonghas Bhaile Fhionnlaidh." "Am Bruadar, oran air cor na rioghachd 'sa bhliadhna 1715."†

There is another song that may be mentioned here for want of a more suitable place. "Sean Oran a rinn bana-chombanach do Dhonull gorm Mac Raonuill Mhic Ailein 's a leannan."

Dhonuil Mhic Neill Mhic Iain Bhuidhe,
Chaidh do shaothair ort am mudha,
Leig thu 'ghruagach uait air shiubhal,
Le fear àrd na gruaige duibhe
Cruinn chas dhireadh.

Fonn (Chorus).

'Se mo leannan th' ann ho ro gheallaidh
Cò sheinneadh ealaidh mur sin.

6 verses, 24 lines.

† In Glenbard Collection.

A LOCHABER JACOBITE SONG.

The following stanzas were also taken down from Mr MacArthur, Fort Augustus, by Miss Josephine MacDonell, who did not know the author's name, but being himself a descendant of a scion of the House of Keppoch, and the song being a Jacobite one, it deserves mention. The author was probably a prisoner in England after the "forty-five."

Ged tha mise so ann Sasunn,
Cha 'n 'eil a fasan tighinn 'am chàileachd ;
'S mòr gu'm b' fheàrr 'bhith measg nan gruagaich
Far an cluinninn fuaim na Gàidhlig.

'S mòr gu'm b' fheàrr bhi measg nan gruagaich
Far an cluinninn fuaim na Gàidhlig
Bleodhainn a' chruidh air na buailtean
'S na laoigh òg mu'n cuairt ri bàraich.

Mo mhallachd air na casaig lùighseach,
'Si thug sgrios air tìr nan àrd-bheinn ;
Cha chan mi gur Gàidheal dìleas
'Chuireas air a dhruim gu bràth i.

'S mòr gu'm b' fheàrr am breacan rìomhach
Féileadh, 's bonaid grinn 's cocàd innt',
Biodag chraigneach 's lann chinn ileach,
'Se 'thogadh inntinn cblann nan Gàidheal.

'S ioma òig fhear 'bha deas dìreach
'Sheasadh dìleas ri uchd a' chatha
'Tha ann Culodair dhiubh 'na shìneadh
'Chuir sìol na muic gu tìr nan laoich.

'S ioma té a bha gun annsachd
Agus bantrach 'bha dheth cràiteach,
Agus mhàthair 'bha gun mhac ann,
Och mo chreach, 's mi 'g acain pàirt diubh.

Thearlaich òig an fhìor-fhuil rìoghail,
'Sheasadh dìleas cùis nan Gàidheal,
Chuir na cùlanan fo chìs thu,
Sìol na muic 'nan rìghre 't' àite.

'S ho na'n tigeadh t'oighre, a Thearlaich,
'S ho na'n tigeadh t'oighre, a Thearlaich,
Dh' fhalbhamaid gu aotrom sunndach
Dìleas dlùth ri cùl a shàlach.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD, RIDGE, N.S.

Mr Alexander MacDonald, Ridge, or rather of Upper South River, Nova Scotia, writes me some interesting details about the Lochaber bards. "With regard to Iain Lom's "Marbhrann do dh' Alasdair Dubh Ghlinne Garaidh," to the air of "'S ann aig taobh Beinne Buidhe," he says that neither Dr MacNicol nor Dr MacIntyre, Kilmonivaig, could know more or give a better account of Iain Lom than his forefathers, because they were good seanachaidhean, and of the same branch of MacDonalds as Iain was (the Keppochs),

and he is sure that they would keep a correct account of such a remarkable man of their own family, and as to his not being fit to compose the elegy in his old age, he remarks—"We have at present in this country two persons who have reached the advanced age of 103 years. They are Mr Angus Campbell and Mrs MacLean, of Antigonish town. Mrs MacLean possesses all her faculties, as you will see from the enclosed slip, cut from the *Antigonish Casket*. Mr Campbell is also as bright as ever, and let me tell you there never was a Campbell or MacLean on earth who possessed better faculties than Iain Lom. My father's story about him was that he was in his fifteenth year at the battle of Sronachlachain in 1640, and was among the boys who drove the "Creach" when the battle was fought between the Lochaber and Breadalbane men. He died at the age of 105. When his grave was closed on the day of his funeral, Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch, who fell at Culloden, asked Alasdair Mac Aonghuis, i.e., Alasdair Ruadh of Glencoe, to say something about the deceased; so he recited the following verses (which have already been mentioned under the head of Iain Lom, with slight variation, as having been asked for by Coll of Keppoch):—

Chunna mi crìoch air m'fhear-cinnidh
Air a phasgadh 'an Tom Aingeal;
'Ughdair, 's a righ nam filidh,
Gu'n deanadh Dia sìth ri t'anam!

An righ mòr 'thoirt mathanas dhuit
Air son mar dhìoladh tu an t-olc;
Tha gaol an leòghainn 's fuath an tuirc
Anns an uaigh 's a bheil do chorp.

B' fhuath leat Uilleam, b' fuath leat Màiri,
B' fhuath leat na thàinig bho Dhiarmod,
B' fhuath leat gach neach nach biodh rioghail,
'S dh' innseadh tu féin e gun iarraidh.

"'S mise Alasdair Mac Ailein 'ic Alasdair 'ic Aonghuis 'ic Alasdair Bhàin 'ic Alasdair Mhòir, 'ic Aonghuis a' bhòchdain, 'ic Aonghuis Mhòir Bhothiunntin, 'ic Alasdair, 'ic Iain Duibh 'ic Raonuill Mhòir na Ceapaich."‡

"There are two branches of tigh-Bhothiunntin:—Sliochd Alasdair and Sliochd Aonghuis. Both branches are known as 'Sliochd an taighe,' and also as Sliochd Iain Duibh 'ic Raonuill. In 1746 the two sons of Fear Bhothiunntin (Iain Og and Donald Glas) were transported to South Carolina for the part they had taken in the rebellion of 1745. Then my great-grandfather, Aonghas Mac Alasdair Bhàin, became representative, or Ceann Taigh to Bothiunntin, and after him my grandfather. In my own young days in Cape Breton the members of the family of Bothiunntin saluted my uncle Angus 'Cean Taigh.' In 1816 my grandfather, with his family, emigrated from Achnancoichichan, in the Braes of Lochaber, to Nova Scotia, and settled in the South-West Ridge, Mabon, C.B. He had three sons, Angus, Allan, and Donald, and five daughters. They were all settled in that county, and had large families. He died in 1829 in his 76th year. His wife, Mary Campbell, died in 1860, leaving descendants to the number of 250. In 1847 my father with his family left the Ridge and came to Upper South River, Antigonish County, about 80 miles from his former residence. I am myself in my 77th year, but do not expect to live as long as Iain Lom did. At the beginning of this century some Scotch historians got to work writing, and I believe their main object was to make money, as they had a good many errors in their works. I suppose they believed nobody knew better. As you have remarked, the best seanachies and singers left Scotland. They left Lochaber for certain."

"If you see Neil MacLeod, the Skye bard, you can tell him I sent to Scotland for one of his books, "Clàrsach an Doire." Tell him also that John MacDonald, contractor, Antigonish, and I drank his Deoch-slàinte on 'Xmas eve, simply because he is such a good Gaelic bard, though he composed one proud song on "Clann Leòid," p. 38. Here is one verse of it—

Théid an tarbh mar a b' àbhaist
Air an toiseach 's a' ghàbhadh,
'S cuiridh bùirein bho 'chàirean
Crith air nàmhaid Chlann Leòid.

To which I made the following reply on behalf of the MacDonalds:—

CLANN DOMHNUILL.

LE ALASDAIR AN RIDGE.

Rinneadh an t-òran so mar fhreagairt do dh-òran-molaidh Chlann Leòid.

SEISD:—Ho i ri ri iu o
Ho i ri ri iu o
Hi ri ri s na i iu o
Tha mo rùn air Clann Dò'ill.

‡ This formidable pedigree has already been mentioned.

Gur a binn leam 'bhi leughadh
Mu'n churaidh 'bha 'n Slèibhte,
Dò'ull Mac Iain 'Ic Sheumais
'Chuir 'nan éigin Clann Leòid.

Latha mòr sin na tràghad
Le aon dusan de chàirdean
Bha dà-fhichead 's an àiridh
De dh-àlach Chlann Leòid.

Ged bha 'n tarbh air an reidhlein
'S e air toiseach na cléithe,
Cha do chrith na fir Shléibhteach,
'S bha 'n ratreut air Clann Leòid.

Cha d' rinn bratach na sìthe
Air an là ud bhur didean,
Bha dà-fhichead 'nan sìneadh
Dh' aindeoin innleachd Chlann Leòid.

B' iomad gaisgeach math gleusda
'Bha tàmh ann an Slèibhte,
Sir Dòmhnull 's Sir Seumas
Agus ceudan a chòrr.

Dun-Tuilm nam fear treubhach,
Dun flathail na féille,
'S am biodh tathaich luchd-theudan,
Far an éisdeadh ri ceòl.

Clann Dòmhnuill mo ghràidh-sa
Bu ro-chliùiteach mar thàinig
Bho righrean na Spàinnte
'S bho chinn-àrd na Roinn-Eòrp'.

Clann Dòmhnuill nan geur-lann,
An cinneadh mòr euchdach,
'Nuair a chàirteadh gu streup iad
Cha bu réidh dol 'nan còir.

Bho Gharaidh 's bho Shléibhte,
Bho Mhudart nan geugan,
'S bho Cheapaich nam freumhan,
Dheanadh reubadh is leòn.

Thig bho Mhòr-thìr na stuaidhe,
'S bho Chothann nam fuar-bheann,
Fir nach sòradh an tuasaid,
'S tric thug buaidh anns an tòir.

Dream eile 'bha ceutach,
Anns a' chaonnaig nach géilleadh,
Iarla Antruim á Eirinn
Leis an éireadh na slòigh.

B iad na suinn a bha ainmeil,
Leis na chuireadh cath-gharbhraeh,
'S a fhuair tigh is leth Albainn
Air a dhearbhadh le còir.

Tha bhur n-eachdraidh ro-dhìreach,
Iarla Rois agus Ile,
Innse-Gall is Chinntìre,
Sìol a' Mhìlidh 's nan sròl.

'Nuair a thogte bhur bratach
'Dol ri aodainn nam baiteal
'Bhi air deas-làimh nan gaisgeach
B'e sid fasan nan seòd.

Is na'm fàgte sid aca,
Mar a b'àbhaist 's mar chleachd iad,
Gu'n tàradh iad dhachaidh
Fir Shasuinn nan cleòchd.

ALLAN MACDONALD, RIDGE, N.S.

The following is an additional song by the late Allan MacDonald, Ridge, Nova Scotia, father of Alexander MacDonald, of Upper South River, Antigonish County, N.S. In sending it Mr Alexander MacDonald says :—"'Oran na Comhachaig' was, most certainly, composed by Domhnull MacFhiullaidh about 400 years ago." That is the tradition among the emigrants that left Lochaber, and has been handed down from generation to generation.

CATRIONA NIGH'N DUGHAILL.

LE AILEAN AN RIDGE.

Catriona nigh'n Dùghaill
Bu ghrinn a chruit chiùil i,
'Nuair 'sheinn i le sunnd
Sud na fuinn 'bu mhath gleusadh,
Bha m' inntinn fo ionghnadh
Ri linn dhomh bhi dùsgadh,
'S mi 'cluinntinn a' chiùil ud ;
Bu chiùin is bu réidh e.
Thug i sòlas do m' chridhe
'Nuair thòisich i rithisd
Air crònan do nioghnaig
Bu chridheil i-fein ris ;
'Seinn òrain do 'n leanabh,
Sud an ceòl a bha tairis,
'Bha bòidheach ri aithris,
'S mi 'm chaithris gu h-éisdeadh.

Air mo thaobh anns an leaba,
Eadar dhùsgadh is chadal,
Thug mi ùine mar bh' agam ;
Bha mi fada gu éirigh,
'S mi 'g éisdeachd an òrain
'Bu ghrinne 's bu bhòidhche ;
Bu bhinne e na'n t-eòinein
'Bhiodh air meòirean nan geugan.
'S ann leamsa 'bu bhòidhch' e
Na 'n uiseag air lònan,
'S i 'sior chur ri ceòl
Anns an òg mhaduinn chéitein ;
Na ceileireadh smeoraich
A sheinneadh 's na h-òganan ;
B'fhearr leam gu mòr e
Na ceòl as na teudan.

Cha robh 'phiob 's i 'na deannaibh,
No ceòl fidhle th' air thalamh,
Chuirinn fein ris an coimeas,
'S bha mi tamull 'ga éisdeachd
Guth cinn a bha fallain,
Bu bhinn leam do challan,
'S bu ghrinn 'bha mac-talla

'S a' bhalla toirt beus d' i.
Bean shiobhalta, chòir i,
Gun mhiothlachd, gun ghò innt' ;
Gu'm bu dìleas i dhòmhsa,
'S tric a chòmhn' i mi 'm éiginn ;
Bean laghach 's i fialaidh,
Air an tadhail na ciadan ;
Làmh a dheanamh na biatachd,
'S tric a riaraich i feumaich.

Thug i 'n dùthchas bho 'màthair,
'Bhi gu fiughanta, bàigheil :
Gu 'n d' ionnsaich i tràth dh' i
Bhi gu nàdarra beusach ;
'S cha b' e Dùghall 'bu tàire,
Fear ciùin 's e ro stàthail,
Gun lùb no gun àrdan,
'S gun droch nàdar fo 'n ghréin ann.
Ged a tha sinn am Màbu,
Gum b' fhearr bhi mar bhà sinn,
Ann an toiseach mo làithean,
Air àiridh na spréidhe :
Ann an strath Choire-Làire
Bha sinn càrantach, càirdeil,
'S gach duine bho 'n d'thàinig sinn
Bàigheil ri 'cheile.

Fhuair i ri phòsadh
Fear suairc' de Chlann-Dòmhnuill,
Nach gluaiseadh le gòraich,'
Duine còir 's e làn céille.
Làn tuigs' agus riaghailt,
'S e iochdmhor ro chiallach :
Fear glic 's e gun mhiothlachd,
Duin' fial 'na thaigh fèin e.
Tha e nàdarra stuama ;
'S ann dasan bu dual sin
'Bhi gun àrdan, gun bhruaillein,
Gun bhuaireadh gun leumraich.
E-féin is a bhràithrean,
Cha' n e aon ac' a's tàire ;
'S mis' a dh' fhaodas a ràdhainn
Gu'm bu chàirdeil ruinn féin iad.

Bha Ailean an Ridge, no a' Mhàim, air oidhche àraid ann an taigh Dòmhnullàich am Mabu. Bha bean fear-an-taighe, Catriona nighean Dùghaill, a' gabhail crònain do nighinn bhig a b' ogha dh' i agus i a' feuchainn ri cur a chadal. Bha Ailean cho toilichte le binneas a gutha 's gu'n do thòisich e air an òran 'na leaba. Bha an té dha 'n do rinneadh an t-òran, Catriona nighean Dhùghaill Chaimbeil, de shliochd a' Phìobaire Mhòir a bha 's a' Cheapaich. Bha i 'na boirionnach gasda, measail.

ALASDAIR BUIDHE MACDONALD.

About the middle of last century Alasdair Buidhe, Mac Aonghuis, 'ic Alasdair Mhòir, was coming from Edinburgh, and it was late at night when he came to upper Foil. On arriving at the house where he intended to put up for the night he heard some good singing going on inside. There were a number of people singing, "Fire faire faramach bidh òl air bainnis Dhùill." He stood quietly at the door until they were finished, and then rapped. When the door was opened he sang the following verse which he composed on the spot :—

Cha'n fheàirde mi 'bhi socharach,
'S nach ceàird dhomh 'bhì ri dorsaireachd,
'S ma leigeas sibh 'n 'ur toiseach mi
Gu'n coisinn mi mo rùm ann.

There happened to be a witty fellow inside who answered—

Bu mhath leinn fhéin 'n ar comunn thu,
'S bu taitneach leinn mu ar coinneamh thu,
Na'n innseadh tu do shloinneadh dhuinn
'S na ceil cò i do dhùthaich.

Then Alasdair Buidhe said—

Ged tha mo dhùthaich fada bhuam,
Bu dùthchas an tìr Abrach dhomh,
'S am biodh na fiùrain mhaiseiche,
Nach taisicheadh le mùiseag.

'S bho 'n dh' fhaighneachd thu mo shinnsearachd,
Gu sloinnte air an Iarl Ilich mi,
Sìol Chuinn an sloinneadh dìrich,
'S cha téid an ìre 'mhùthadh.

This Alasdair Buidhe was a strong man. He was Mr Alexander MacDonald, Ridge's, great grandfather's cousin. His father was the husband of Nighean Aonghuis Oig, the poetess. She was rather stingy, and he was very good-hearted. Some one composed a song to them as follows :—

Tha cridhe na circe
Gun mhisneach aig Màiri,
Théid i beag o ho ro, théid i beag o,
Tha cridhe fial farsuinn
'Na luidhe ceart làimh-rithe
Théid i beag o hi o huil ho ro hug oran an.

Tha cridhe fial farsuinn
'Na luidhe ceart làimh-rithe,
Théid i beag o ho ro, théid i beag o,
'Us inntinn a' ghaisgich
Nach taisich roimh nàmhaid :
Théid i beag o hi o huil ho ro hug oran an.

'Us inntinn a' ghaisgich
Nach taisich roimh nàmhaid,
Théid i beag o ho ri, théid i beag o,
'S nach tionndaidh a chùlthaobh
Ri fùdar no stàilinn :
Théid i beag o hi o huil ho ro hug oran an.

'S nach tionndaidh a chùlthaobh
Ri fùdar no stàilinn,
Théid i beag o ho ri, théid i beag o,

Latha Sliabh-an-t-siona,
Bu churaidh thar càch e:
Théid i beag o hi o huil ho ro hug oran an.

Latha Sliabh-an-t-siona
Bu churaidh thar càch e,
Théid i beag o ho ro, théid i beag o,
'Bhualadh nam buillean
Gu curanta làidir:
Théid i beag o hi o huil ho ro hug oran an.

Alasdair Buidhe's father, Alasdair Mòr, fought at the battle of Mulroy in 1688, and was transported to Holland, where he died of yellow fever the same year. He was 6 feet 8 inches in height, and stout in proportion. He and Aonghus Mór na Tulocha were at that time the heroes of the country."

"Nighean Aonghuis Oig composed many a song to her husband after his death; one of them is as follows:—

O! 's mi tha gun sunnd
Gun bheadradh gun mhuirn
Bho'n chuir iad 's an ùir an t-aon duine:
O, 's mi, &c.

Duine céillidh 's e glic,
As an ìre bu mhòr meas,
Cha tugadh fear mi-sgoinn cùisean dheth.

Duine foghainteach garg,
'N uair ghabhadh e 'n fhearg
'N àm tarruing nan arm cha b' e 'n cùlanach.

'N àm rùsgadh nan lann
B' e 'n curaidh gun mheang,
'S b' e 'n gaisgeach neo-fhann 's a' chaonnaig e.

I also append a song by Allan MacDonald, Ridge, N.S., the father of Mr Alexander, who has supplied me with the above information. It is a song in praise of whisky, and descriptive of the weakness of those who worship at the shrine of Bacchus. A very good song.

ORAN DO'N UISGE-BHEATHA.

LE AILEIN DOMHNULLACH (AN RIDGE).

Ge fada na mo thàmh mi
Tha'n damhair dhomh dùsgadh,
Cia fath mu'n thriall mo mhanran
'S gu 'm b'àbhaist dhomh sùgradh;
'S e n lagh a rinn am Pàpa
'Thug m' àbhachd gu tuirse
'S a tharruinn mi gu smuairean
Bho'n dh'fhuadaich e 'n drùdhag

Cha'n'eil mi 'chreideamh Phàpa,
Chalbhin no Luthair,
'S e 'n creideamh a bh'aig Bàchus
'Tha làidir 'nam shùilean;
'Se 'n latha 'chum e'n t-sàbaid,
A b'àbhaist dhomh bhi ag ùrnaigh,
'S i 'chailis 'bha 'na làimh
'Rinn mo thàladh gu dlùth ris.

'S e 'n creideamh a bh'aig Bàchus
Da'm b'-àbhaist dhomh géilleadh,
'S e 'b'fheàrr na 'bhi dol bàs
Le bhi cràbhadh 's a' leughadh,
'S e 'cheileireadh 's a shòlas
'Chuir eòlas nan ceud air,
'S e bhuadhan bho Apollo
'Chuir mòran an déigh air.

Ach teirmeasg ort, a Bhachuis,
'Rinn m' fhàillinn, 's bu mhòr i,
'Nuair fhuair thu'n lùib do ghràidh mi
Le t'amhuiltean gòrach;
Bu bhinne leam ri éisdeachd
An téis 'thig bho d'sgòrnan
Na'n fhiodhull le 'cuid theudan
No gleusadh nan òrgan.

'Nuair thionaileamaid còmhla
Mu'n bhòrd 's an tigh-sheinse,
Na fir m'am bithinn eòlach
'S na h-òigearan gleusda,
'Nuair chìthinn stuth na tòiseachd
'S an coisreadh cho éibhinn
Bu bhinne leam an ceòl sin
Na smeòrach 's a' chéitein.

Bu chàrantach leam 'aogas
'Ga thaomadh 's an stòpan,
An sruthan tairis caoin
A nì 'chraobhag a's bòidhche
Seach stuth a th' air an t-saoghal
Bu chaomhaìl ri òl e,
'S 'nuair gheibhinn e ri m' bhial
B' e mo mhiann 'bhi 'ga phògadh.

Thug mise gaol-folaich dha,
'S cha dealaich e ri m' bheò rium,
Barr 's a thug na caileagan
Do leannan no dh' fhear-pòsda,
Còrr 's a' cheithir uiread
'S a thug Uilleam riamh do Mhòraig,
S ma théid a nis ar tearbadh
Gu dearbh cha b'e 'chòir e.

Sheinneadh e na h-òrain
'Bu bhòidhche ri éisdeachd,
Bu ro-mhath bhualadh dhòrn e;
Gu'm b' eòlach air streup e;
Bu mhath e measg nan òighean
'S nan òigearan beusach,
'S e 'chuireadh air an dòigh iad
'An crocain a chéile.

Bu mhath a chluith a' chiùil e,
Bu shiùbhlach air dannsa e,
Sheinneadh e na fuinn
'Chumadh cuimhn' air na bàrdaibh;
Bu mhath e anns a h-uile rud,
'S gu 'm b'urramach 's gach àm e,
Ahc daoine coimheach gnùthaidh
Cha dùraig iad ann e.

'S truagh nach d' rugadh dall mi
Gun chainnt no gun léirsinn
Mu 'm facas riamh an dram sin
'Rinn aimhleas nan ceudan ;
'Nuair bhuaileas e 's a' cheann mi
Gu'n teann e ris fhéin mi,
'S cha 'n fhasa leam na 'm bàs
A bhi làthair as 'eugais.

Sguiridh mi 'bhi teagasg air
No 'beadradh ris an dràsda,
Bho 'n a chuir greadabh air
Le Eaglaisean a' Phàpa ;
Ma 'se 's gur éiginn dealachadh,
Mo bheannachd gu là-bhràch leis,
'S mo bheannachdan 's mo ghaol
Do gach aon a thug gràdh dha.

AN DOMHNULLACH FURANACH*

A song that is very popular in Skye is "An Dòmhnullach Furanach," said to have been composed to MacDonald of Lynedale, by a Skye girl. This was Colonel Alexander MacDonald, IX. of Balranald, North Uist, designated of Lynedale, the grandfather of the present Balranald. He was a captain in the Bengal Artillery, and afterwards raised and became Lieutenant-Colonel of the 2nd Isle of Skye Regiment of volunteers. He was a very fine and handsome-looking man. Mr A. R. MacDonald, younger of Waternish, Skye, informs me that his granddaughter, the late Miss MacDonald of Rodil, Harris, had a miniature of him, which will probably now be in possession of Mr MacDonald of Edenwood and Balranald, or some other near relative. Besides Lynedale, Colonel MacDonald possessed at one time the islands of Isry, Mingay, and Clett, now in the possession of Captain MacDonald, Waternish. The song, as given to me by a native of Skye, is different from the version given in Sinclair's "Oranaiche"—the air of which is very pretty.

Seisd—Chorus.

A Dhòmhnullaich fhuranaich,
A dhìreadh na munaidhean,
Tha d' fhoghlum cho àrd,
'S ged a dh' àraicht' an Lunainn thu !

B'è mo ghràdh an t-àrmunn,
A thug Dirdaoin an tràigh air ;
Gu'n òlainn do dheoch-slàinte,
'S è b' fhearr na bhi muladach.

Ma théid thu do na h-Innsean
Air long nan crannag-ìseal
Gu'n tréiginnse mo dhùthaich
A ghiùlan a' ghunna dhuit.

Sgiobair air a' chuan thu,
'Nuair dh' éireadh na tuinn uaine,
'S leat urram nan daoin'-uaisle,
Cha ghruaim bhiodh tu 'g iomrachadh.

Sgiobair thu air Bìrlinn
Cho maith 's a tha ri fhaotainn,
Sàr iomainich' air raon thu
Ach daoin' a bhi cuide riut.

Sealgair an daimh chròicich
A dhìreas a' ghlac cheòthach,
'Us coileach-dubh a' chrònain
'S an ròin ri òis tuinne thu !

Do chiù fada dìreach.
'Sè 'n ceangal anns an t-sìoda,
Na 'm faighinns' bhi 'ga chìreadh,
Cha bhitheadh ni dh' am uireasbhuidh.

Thig còta dhuit neo-chearbach
Fo chrios nam balla meana-bhreac,
'Us claidheamh geur 'chinn airgid
Gu'n dearbhadh tu buillean leis.

Do Chridhe mar an Daoimean,
Làn ceartais agus aoibhneis !
'Nuair dhìreadh tu na staidhre,
Bhitheadh soills' anns na h-uinneagan !

Tha taoghal maradh 's tire
An tigh an fhleasgaich rìomhaich,
Làmh 'sgapadh an Fhìon-dubh
'S a dhìoladh na tunnachan.

'S è mo ghaol an Ceann-ard,
Bha òirnn 'an tigh na bainnse,
'S ann domhsa nach bu chall sud,
'S na bh' ann a' toirt urram dhuit.
A Dhòmhnullaich fhuranaich, etc.

Few swains of the present day could match the beauty and splendour of the hero of this song, whose image the very windows reflected effulgently to the admiring observer. The authoress' name is not known. It was probably an affair of the heart.

EXPLANATION OF A FEW UNCOMMON WORDS.

Verse 2—"Crannag-ìseal,"—spars and cross-beams.

Verse 3—"Iomrachadh,"—carrying, or bearing ; a deportment.

Verse 5—"Ois,"—of the border of the wave ; where seals lie.

Verse 6—"Balla meana-bhreac,"—all manner of ornamental things on his dress.

Verse 6—"Neo-chearbach,"—well-made, fitting the figure.

Verse 7—With this splendid appearance—of a countenance beaming with kindness from the *Diamond Heart*—and bright tartan, sparkling stones, silver buckles, buttons, including

* Gracious, kindly, courteous in aspect and manner.

the silver-hilted sword—the windows reflected his image to the admiring observer on some occasion as he went up the staircase to join the marriage party over which he had been presiding.

NIAL MAC EACHAINN MHIC SHEAMAIS.†

(NEIL SON OF HECTOR SON OF JAMES.)

Neil MacEachainn MacDonald, the faithful friend and follower of Prince Charles Edward Stewart, and Flora MacDonald, and father of the celebrated Marshall MacDonald, Duke of Tarentum, did not profess to be a poet, but since he composed one poem at least, he is too important a personage to be omitted from the list of MacDonald bards. He was born at Howbeg, or Houghbeag,‡ in South Uist, in 1719, and, according to Mr Alexander Carmichael, was remotely connected with Flora MacDonald through the Clanranalds. He was educated in France, at the Scotch College at Douai, and was probably destined for an ecclesiastical career. His son, the Marshall, did not know what his tastes or wishes were, but he knew that, after completing a brilliant course of study, he returned to his native country, and from thence he was summoned by Prince Charles to share the good and bad fortune of the foolhardy campaign of 1745§. After the battle of Culloden, fought on the 16th of April, 1746, and when the Prince was a fugitive seeking shelter in caves and other places of concealment, and while wandering about from island to island among the Hebrides, Neil MacEachainn was his guide and friend, until at last the heroine, Flora MacDonald, succeeded in baffling their pursuers, and saw him safely out of the Isle of Skye, when, a couple of months after, he escaped on board of a French ship from Borradale (Loch-nan-uamh) on the 19th Sept., 1746, which weighed anchor shortly after midnight, and sailed for France. There is a mystery about the name of the ship in which the Prince sailed, "Colonel Warren in a letter to O'Brien, of 29th August, 1746, says he is going to Scotland with the "L'Heureux" and the "Prince of Conti," to try and bring off the Prince. Glenaladale says the ship he sailed in was the "Happy." Burton says it was the "Bellona." In Finlayson's map it is called "Bellona," and in one passage in the "Scots Magazine" it is said to be the "Happy," while in another it is called the "Bellona." All Lord Albermarle's spies agree that two French ships arrived at Loch-nan-uamh on the 6th of Sept., and Donald MacDonald, who acted as interpreter to Bishop Forbes, actually went on board the "Prince of Conti" in which the Prince went off, says the other ship was the "Louine" which he might have mistaken for "L'Heureux."‖ In Brown's history of the Highlands it says that the Prince sailed from Loch-nan-uamh, Arisaig, on the 20th of Sept., 1746, on board either the "L'Heureux," or "La Princesse de Conti," and arrived safely off Roscoff, or Roscort, near Morlaix in Lower Bretagne, where he landed on Monday, the 29th Sept., at half past two in the afternoon. An eminent Scotch judge divided liars into three classes, viz., common liars; 2, d—— liars; and 3, expert witnesses. In future historians may be added as a 4th class. When history is so contradictory on such a recent event how can it be trusted on larger issues. When Flora MacDonald was liberated from the tower of London, in 1747, she particularly interested herself on behalf of old Kingsburgh, who was a state prisoner in Edinburgh Castle for sheltering the Prince, and she succeeded in procuring his freedom, as also that of Donald MacLeod, of Galtrigal—Calum Mac Iain Mhic Iain—who went in the capacity of guide to the Prince from the island of Raasay to Kilmorie in Strathaird, and also of Neil MacEachainn (MacDonald) described in most histories as Flora MacDonald's servant. He was no more a servant of hers in reality than the Prince himself. If he had been a servant he never would have written to her on terms of equality as the following letter shows. Neither would he have been dining with the Prince and Clanranald the night they were arrested in Paris, nor would he have been chosen to be the only friend and companion of the Prince when he was detained in prison in Paris. Extracts from his letter to Flora MacDonald :—

† This notice should have appeared after Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair.

‡ Houghbeag was the home farm of Clan Ranald, chosen in 1616 by command of the Privy Council, as he had none at Castle Tirrim. Gregory, p. 393.

§ Recollections of Marshall MacDonald.

‖ Scottish History Society, Vol. xxiii, 1897.

Paris, Feb. 28th, 1769.

DEAR FLORRY,

I've often had it in my head to write you since I parted with you at Edinburgh, but as I did not know how long you stayed there, I was at a loss for a direction, but as your welfare is always agreeable to me, it gives me pleasure to hear the reason that has brought you back to London, &c. . . . The gentleman who delivers this is a friend of mine, and I hope that is enough to make you exert yourself among the honest and worthy, to help him to dispose of some valuable toys he has upon hand. I am sure it must give you a sensible joy to hear the person you once had the honour to conduct is in perfect good health. . . . Clan Ranald has his kindest compliments to you. . . . He and I dined with somebody the very day they were took. Good God what a fright we got!

No servant would write in such familiar terms to a mistress. Besides Neil MacEachainn, who by the way signed himself "N. MacDonald" in the above letter, was a good scholar for the time, and was very studious. He was well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues, which he spoke easily, as well as French, English, and Gaelic. It was after his liberation that he composed the poem. When matters were fully and finally arranged, our heroine, with her faithful Neil MacEachainn, left London in a coach-and-four for the Scottish metropolis. During this journey of several days, the exhuberance of Neil's spirits could hardly be restrained within proper bounds. He was naturally an active, lively, and manly youth, possessed of considerable wit, and no small share of poetic genius. He, as well as most of his companions never expected to return. They were fully prepared to suffer as others had done in the Stewart cause. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that our hero should have felt somewhat elated. It was about this time he composed the following lines.

Thugadh ochan! air falbh mi bho Eilean mo ghràidh
Gu dol suas dh'ionnsuidh Lunnain gu'm chrochadh gun dàil;
Air son gu'n d'thug mi furtachd do Thearlach an àigh,
Gus am faigheadh e ann an tearuinteachd 'null thar sàil!

Bha Fionghal, Nighean Raonuill, a daonnan ri m' thaobh,
Chum mo stiùireadh le gliocas, 's le misnich ro thréin;
Bha i deas agus dìleas a dhìonadh an laoich
'Bha gun charaid co dian rith 'n àit eile fo'n ghréin!

A nis fhuair sinn ar saorsa o dhaorsa na truaigh
Chum gu'm pill sin air ais dh'ionnsuidh Eilein ar breith,
'S thugadh clìù do'n Oigh mhaisich nach comas a luaidh,
Leis an fhilidh a's ealant' gu seinn as a leth!

Chaidh sinn cuideachd air falbh, 's thain' cuideachd air ais,
Ann an carbad ceithir chuidh 'leach 's dà chaigeann each,
Is tha aoibhneas is gleadhraich 's ceòl-fluaim nach 'eil tais
A' toirt suaimhneis is spionnaidh do'n chridhe aig gach neach!

Thug am Prionnsa an Fhraing air, ach chìthear e rìs,
Dhruideadh mach as an tìr e, ach leanar a cheum;
'S bidh Nial MacEachainn Mhic Sheamais a ris fo chìs,
Mur grad-ghreas e gu Tearlach, 'na ruith is 'na leum.

Ochan! Fhionghail, Nighinn Raonuill, gu'm b'eutrom do cheum,
'Dol a dh'fhaicinn do Thearlaich a'r àrdach' mar righ!
'S a chur fàilt air d'a lùchairt, le 'chrùn-òir nan seud,
Is e 'riaghladh na rioghachd, le ciùineas 's le sìth!

Shortly after this, Neil Mac Eachainn left his native country and settled in France, where he was put into Ogilvy's Scotch regiment After the peace of 1763, nearly all the foreign regiments were disbanded. Among them was Ogilvy's, and Neil MacEachainn being proscribed in his own country and abandoned in France, he was reduced to live upon the modest pension of three hundred livres (about £30).* Almost immediately afterwards he made what in military circles is called a "garrison marriage," he wedded a girl without any fortune, and settled at Sedan where the Marshall was born on November 17, 1765. When he was invited by Lord Nairn, proscribed like himself, to the little town of Sancerre, near Bourges, the cheapness of the living, and probably of the wine, which is good, had determined these gentlemen to settle there, other Scotsmen had preceded them. In this retreat, with his friends and his books, he consoled himself for the cruelty of fortune. Though generally a quiet man, he was an excellent talker. His memory was well stored, full of anecdote, and being a good musician and player of the violin, he was much esteemed and sought after by the society of that time.†

In 1784 an Act of Amnesty was passed by the English Parliament permitting fugitives to return, but he never saw his country again. One of his compatriots, a Mr MacNab, collected all his books and papers, but MacNab at the time being a corporal in the bodyguard was, like so many others, seized during the Revolution, arrested,

* Recollections of Marshall MacDonald.

† Ibid.

and imprisoned. His papers were carried off and lost for ever. He died at Sancerre in 1788 from the effects of a fall which had dislocated his hip, in his sixty-ninth year.

One of his companions in durance vile in London was the faithful and well-trusted Donald MacLeod of Galtrigal, Skye, a shrewd, ingenious, and capable man, with great caution, well adapted for carrying out the great object he had in view, viz., in assisting the Prince to elude his enemies. Hence the more eager was the desire of the Government officers to capture him. This was accomplished by his own countryman, Major Allan MacDonald of Knock, parish of Sleat, who had more opportunities than others of ferreting out Donald's movements. Major Allan, commonly called "Ailean a' Chnoic," was a stern, cruel-hearted man. He treated the poor Jacobites with uncalled-for severity, so that he was literally detested by most of his acquaintances, and particularly so by those who had embraced the Prince's cause. A certain priest in Uist composed some verses to him of the most cutting and satirical description, of which the following lines are a sample* :—

Ciod i do bharail air Ailein, a' bheist ?
Cha téid e o'n bhaile gun iùil as a dhéigh,
Bithidh chlaidh air tarsuing, mar gu'n deanadh e tapadh,
B'e sin cuinneag a' mhaistridh, is céis phaisgte nam breug !

Tha'n dubh-phuill air Ailean a' Chnoic,
'S ait leam a chluinntinn air Ailean a' Chnoic,
'S gu'm bheil an dubh-phuill air a sparradh gu grinn
'S gur ait leam a chluinntinn air Ailean a' Chnoic.

"In 1825, when Marshal MacDonald visited Great Britain, he was everywhere received with distinguished honour, both by Government and the people. The cordiality of his reception in London was only equalled by that of his reception in Edinburgh and Inverness. He visited the battlefield of Culloden, and expressed strong disapprobation at the Highlanders for engaging the Royal troops in such a place. He visited the Western Isles in a Revenue cruiser, placed at his disposal by the Government, accompanied by Mr Ranald MacDonald, Writer to the Signet (whom the writer of this sketch knew very well), who was a son of MacDonald of Boisdale, a scion of the MacDonalds of Clan Ranald. The Marshal walked from the ford at Lochdar to Houghbeg, a distance of 10 miles. On coming in sight of the river, he exclaimed—'That is the river Hough. I know it from my father's description ; many a salmon has he caught there.' He sent for all his relations in the neighbourhood. When his blind old uncle was brought to him, he embraced him affectionately, saying, "You dear old man, how like you are to my own father." He addressed his relations in French and broken Gaelic. He took earth from the floor of the house where his father was born, and potatoes from the garden, and these he placed in a bag and carried home with him to France. He planted the potatoes in his garden, and gave orders that the earth should be placed in his coffin after his death." *

* Life of Flora MacDonald by the Rev. Alexander MacGregor.

ROBERT MACDONALD, TEACHER, DINGWALL.

(*Motto*, "*Per mare per terràs.*")

On the 18th of October, 1818, at Strathgarve, Contin, Ross-shire, Mr Robert MacDonald published the following "family record" :—"This record is to certify to all whom it may concern that I, the writer hereof, Robert MacDonald, was born of respectable parents at the west-end of Auldinie Bridge, near Loth, in the parish of Loth Sutherlandshire, at three o'clock in the morning of Monday, the 22nd day of June, A.D. 1795, and was baptised by the Rev. George MacCulloch, minister of Loth. That my father is John MacDonald, farmer and cattle dealer, eldest son of Alex. MacDonald and Janet MacPherson, there. And my mother, Catherine MacDonald, eldest daughter of Robert MacDonald, weaver, and Christina Sutherland, Kintradewell, parish of Loth. My eldest brother, George, was a soldier in the 42nd Regiment, and was wounded, and died thereby, at Bayonne, shortly before the battle of Waterloo. I have living a sister named Isabella, and a brother named Alexander, both younger than myself. I had an uncle and three aunts on my father's side, namely, George, Betty, Isabella, and Elizabeth, and three uncles and one aunt on my mother's side, namely, Donald, John, William, and Helen."

* From notes by Mr Alexander Carmichael in "Recollections of Marshal MacDonald."

Dingwall, December 4th, 1821.

"I was united in marriage to Margaret MacKenzie, eldest daughter of Kenneth MacKenzie, smith, Dingwall, by the Rev. John MacDonald, of Ferintosh. My brother, Alexander, was first a merchant, and after losing his effects by fire in America, became a schoolmaster in Nova Scotia. My ancestors and that of my wife were of the farming line. My grandfathers descended from two MacDonalds who had to flee (one to Sutherland the other to Caithness) from the Western Isles at the time that MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, was overpowered, and, I believe, were natives of Islay."

The issue of the marriage, namely, Georgina, Elizabeth, John, Margaret, Robert, Kenneth, Alexander, Roderick, Katherine, Henry, Ebenezer, are all on the same page, with dates of birth, and certified as being a "true copy" by Roderick MacDonald, London.

His granddaughter, Mrs Margaret MacLeod, Glasgow, from whom the above information was obtained, says that he taught at Inverness, Keils, and Dingwall. His last teaching was Gaelic, in his old age, to the late MacIntosh of MacIntosh at Moy Hall. She never saw any of his work except a small book of poetry in English and Gaelic, and a small pamphlet on "A Sermon to Asses," which is in the possession of her uncle at Partick, The date of his death I have been unable to ascertain. Robert MacDonald's poetic gift must, therefore, be judged by the following elegy on the death of Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch, who died suddenly in 1834 :—

I sing not this for ostentation;
But only as a commem'ration,
Of the lamented worth departed:
Of Kythe Caroline of Gairloch.

This Noble Plant of great renown,
By death was suddenly cut down;
Whereby many, in this nation,
Were stricken with consternation.

Mourn, Ross-shire, mourn, you have great cause,
For her who'n orn'ment to you was—
For her, whose heart with mercy glow'd,
Whose lips with kindness overflow'd.

How sad a stroke Sir Francis got!
His infants too—how sad their lot!
Methinks I see him sadly weep
For her who was his own help-meet.

Oh! how suddenly she was torn
From him and them, whom she adorn'd.

Alas! alas! how he is now
Bereft—bereav'd of his dear love!

He's bereaved of his treasure—
Of his darling—of his pleasure—
Of his delight—and of his choice,
With whom he often did rejoice.

It is no wonder for to hear
Him weeping—mourning for his dear:
And his children, too, lamenting
That she so sudd'nly was sent for.

To him this world is now dreary,
Lonely, desolate, uncheery:
But he must bear it—'tis his lot;
The Lord may bless it. May he not?

If the inhabitants of Gairloch,
Of Conan-side, and Dingwall also,
Would well perceive this visitation,
They would lament their situation.

How appaling this visitation
Is to them and to the nation:
Seeing the Lord, in haste remov'd
Their Patroness who useful prov'd.

This Patroness of Infant Schools,
Who countenanced Moral Rules—
Promoted ev'ry institution,
Within her reach for education.

Weep, infants, weep, she lowly lies,
Who wished to see you happy—wise;
With ardent love her heart was fraught,
She lov'd to see you early taught.

Ye sons and daughters, low and high,
May breathe a mournful feeling sigh;
The heart that now has ceased to beat
Was feeling's own pure—peaceful seat.

But mourn not friends, as those who have
No hope to meet beyond the grave.
Her good example always take,
In doing good for Jesus's sake.

According to the light she got,
She did endeavour to promote
The Gospel cause, both far and near,
In foreign lands as well as here.

She liv'd an honour to her sex,
And churls and misers she did vex;
By her kind acts to the oppressed;
And also to the poor distressed.

She used to breathe a sweet perfume
In ev'ry place where she had room;
She lov'd to aid and patronise
The diligent, the good, and wise.

How sweet, and amiable, and kind,
She show'd the workings of her mind.
In schemes, and plans, and such essays
As might be useful many ways.

If she had liv'd for many years,
What good she'd do, from what appear'd
Her busy mind could find no rest—
How she perform'd, is now a test.

On what she did, now many look,
Wondering at the pains she took,
Especially to teach the young
And rising generation.

A solemn warning this to all—
By it the Lord does loudly call
To high and low—to rich and poor,
To make their own salvation sure.

For none shall get eternal rest,
Nor e'er in happiness be blest;
But only such as live to Him
Who died to save them from their sins.

By saving grace we must be sav'd—
The way to rest, with love is pav'd—
Love both to God and all mankind
Rules in the soul who rest shall find.

Besides the above he wrote an elegy on the death of his daughter, Elizabeth, who died in child-birth, March 9th, 1866, aged 41.

When she rose at early morning
Full of health, all blythe and gay,
She never thought it was the dawning
Of her last—her dying day.

Will ye trifle any longer,
Will ye not regard the call,
Ye who think yourselves much stronger,
Ye may be the next to fall,

Farewell, dear children, my life is past,
Your love for me so long did last,
Grieve not for me, nor sorrow take,
But love each other for my sake.

He also published a small collection of religious poems as an affectionate warning, to which is added an appendix which is very severe upon Christian women who ponder over amorous books, ballads, and romances, and all vain dressing of the body and hair, quoting Tertulian on the women of his time, "What doth this cumbersome dressing of the head contribute to your health? Why will you not suffer your hair to be at rest and lie quiet? which is sometimes tied up, sometimes relayed and made to hang down, sometimes frizzled and curled, sometimes put under a strict restraint of plaits, knots, combs, and otherwise, and sometimes suffered to flutter and fly at random." It is equally severe upon men for "drinking healths, tippling, carding, dicing, dancing, theatre-going, &c., &c., all the work of the Devil! and the houses for such are called "by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church" the Devil's temples, chapels, shops, and schools, the plays are called by them the Devil's spectacles, and the players the Devil's chiefest factors, evidently culled from the works of divines by a very religious man.

TORMOD DONALLACH.

(NORMAN MACDONALD, DUNHALLIN.)

The following two songs were composed by Norman MacDonald, sailor, Dunhallin, Waternish, Skye :—

Fonn (Chorus) :—

Thoir mo shoraidh do'n taobh-tuath,
Eilean Sgiathanach nam buadh,
An t-eilean dha 'n d'thug mi luaidh,
Spòt a's bòidhche fo na neòil.

'S gur ann air toiseach a' Mhàirt
'Dh' fhàg mi eilean gorm mo ghràidh,
Sneachd 'n a thòrran air a làr,
Dh' fhàg sud mo mhàthair fo leòn.

Dh' fhàg e mo phiuthar fo thùs
Mis' bhi fàgail na dùthcha;
'Nuair a thug mi dhi mo chùl
Bha a sùilean fliuch le deòir.

'Nuair ràinig mi Glascho nam bùth,
Ceò is deathach mu mo shùil,
Ghabh mi sìos gu an dock ùr
'S gu'n d' leum mi le sunnd air bòrd.

Dh' fhaighneachd mi de'n sgiobair am beath',
"An d' fhuair thu do chuid làmh gu léir?"
Thuirt e, "Gabhaidh mi thu féin,"
'S chuir mi mo phaipeir 'n a dhòrn.

'S gu'n a dh' fhaighneachd mi gun dàil,
"C' àit am bi i dol a ghnàths?"
"Dol a dh' Australia an dràsd',
"'S cha'u fhaigh thu ni's feàrr rì d' bheo!"

'S ann 's a' mhaduinn, Diardaoin,
'Chuir sinn an long m'a sgaoil;
Dh' fhàg sinn as ar déigh a' Mhaoil,
Rachlin,* is Maoil Chinn-O.

'S cuimhne leam 'nuair bha mi maoth
'Buachailleachd mu'n chreagan chaoil,
Long nan crannaibh ri mo thaobh
Is biorain fraoich 'n a slatan seòl.

'S gu'm mheal leam na mile crùn
A bhi 'n dràsd' air tìr 's an Dùn,
'S mi gu'n togadh mach le sunnd
An rathad ùr aig clann 'ic Leòid.

'Nuair a ruiginn bràigh a' Bhàigh
'S a bheirinn sùil air gach àit,
Chithinn Bhaternish mo ghràidh
Le dìtheana air bhàrr a fheòir.

'S bheirinn sùil air Loch a' Bhàigh
Le 'aibhnichean 's lochan tàmh;
Chì thu gach sgiobair le 'bhàt,
Gabh iasgair le ràmh 'n a dhòrn.

Sealladh a's bòidhche 's an tìr,
Bràigh an Fhàsaich 's Forsabritheamh,
Trumpan is Borra Feitheach,
Eilean Isàl 's an Aird Mhòr.

* Rathlin, Mull of Cantyre, and Mull of Oa.

ORAN BODAICHEAN DHUN-HALLIN.

LE TORMOD DONULLACH.

Gur e mo ghòraich 'thug dhòmhsa
Tìr m' eòlais a thréigsinn,
Dol a sheòladh Long nan seòl
'Nuair ri stòras fhaotainn;
'S ged tha mo phòca gann de'n òr,
Gur mòr a chuirinn feum air,
'S mi anns an Luing 's i dol do Chuibeig,
'S nach cluinn mi ann ach Beurla.

'S truagh nach mise 'bha'n Dun-hallin
Far 'n a dh'àraicheadh òg mi,
Far 'bheil mo mhàthair measg mo chàirdean
Is Tormod Bàn a' còmhnuidh,
Far 'bheil an té dho'n d'thug mi gràdh,
Cha'n'eil 's an àit ni's bòidhche;
Ma's e 's an dàn dhomh pilleadh slàn,
Gu'n gabh mi bàt'-a'-cheò ann.

Sud an t-àit do'n d'thug mi gràdh,
'S e Hallin 'is ainm dha,
O bhràighe Fhasaich sìos mu'n Chàrnaich,
'S lìonmhor gearr shruith meanmnach;
'Nuair thig am blàths 's an corc a' fàs,
'S am buntàta cha searg e,
Bidh smeòrach seinn air bharr gach géig'
A' cur an céill a seanachas.

Tha làithean m' òig-sa mar an ceò
Bho'n bha mi òg 'an Trumpan
Measg dhaoine còire fearail eòlach—
Cha'n'eil beò ach triùir dhiubh;
Gur e am bàs a sguab an t-àite,
Cha'n'eil fàth 'bhi tùrsach;
B'e sgeula deurach leam 'g a leughadh,
Gu'n dh'eug Nial Mac Fhionnlaidh,

Bha Dòmh'all Shaw, duine taitneach,
'S lìonmhor cridhe brònach;
Iain MacNab, Padruig Bàn,
Mo chàirdean 's mo luchd-eòlais,
Iain MacCalum 's Aonghus Petan,
Sud an sgeul a leòn mi;
Thug deòirean dlùth bho iomadh sùil
An uair a bhi 'g an còmhdach,

Sguiridh mi nis dhe mo rann
Bho'n nach ann ach gòraich'
A' smaointeachadh air tìr nam beann
Far a bheil a' chlann 'is bòidhche
'S a' mhaduinn bhòidheach Chéitein
A' dol 'n an treud do'n mhòine,
Ceòl 'bu bhinne leam fo'n ghréin
'Bhi 'g éisdeachd an cuid òran.

SONG ON THE VIEW FROM FASACH BRIDGE.*

BY MURDOCH MACLEAN, KNOCKBREAK, WATERNISH, SKYE.

'S mi 'n am shuidhe 'n am ònar
'G amharc mòralachd Bhatornish,
Coill nan cnò ann 's annsachach,
Gu'm beadarrach 'bhi faisg ort,

Mar sin 's anbharra cùbhraidh
'Tighinn bho 'n tùr a tha taitneach,
Is bòidhche sealladh 'n àm éirigh
Ri latha gréine le 'bhrataich.

Mu àm éirigh na gréine
Maduinn chéitein chiùin earraich,
'S ann leam a b'àille 'bhi gluasad
Mu do bhruachagan fallain;
Bhiodh an uiseag 's an smeòrach,
'S gach ian a's bòidhche 's an ealtainn,
A' seinn a chiùil a bhiodh pròiseil
Na do sheòmraichean fasgach.

Sìos gu bearradh nan Oan
Aite 's bòidhche do'n talamh,
'Nuair thig samhradh nan neòinean
Bidh do chòmhdach mar shneachda;
'Nuair thig samhradh nan neòinean
Bidh do chòmhdach mar shneachda;
Cha'n'eil bean-bainnse 's an t-saoghal
Cho maiseach aogas ri d' leachdainn.

'S lìonmhor diùc is duin'-uasal
Gu'm b'e 'luaidh a bhi faisg ort
Le gunna 'bheòil chruadhach
'Direadh suas air do leachdainn;
Le gunna 'bheoil chruadhach
'Dìreadh suas air do leachdainn,
Far 'm faighte pheasant 's an ruadh-bhoc
Anns na cluaineagan fasgach.

Dhe na shiubhail mi riamh
Eadar Grianaig is Glascho,
Dun-eideann nam bùthannan,
Clach-na-cùdain is Farrais,
Cha do phriob mi mo shùil
Air àite 's cùbhraidh ri fhaicinn
Na na coillteagan uaine
'Tha mu chuairt air an aitreabh.

Ged is ainmeil an t-àite
Bràigh Bhàrr is Blàr Athol
Agus Appain nam Meinearrach
Taobh an iar Abbair Pheallaidh,
Cha'n'eil sealladh cho àlumn
'S 'tha 's an Fhàsach ri fhaicinn,
'S cha'n'eil sid dhomhsa 'n a annas
Gach ni maiseach 'tha 'tàmh ann.

'S ann as a dh'fhalbh a' bhean-uasal
'Bha truasail ciùin bàigheil;
Bu leatha beannachd nam bochda
Fad a cuairt anns an fhàsach;
Ach 's ni cinnteach ri aithris
Gu bheil i 'n díugh ann am Pàrras
Air a gleidheadh gu mùirneach
Anns a' chùirt 's a bheil Abraham.

Ach saoil nach mi 'bha gun aire
'Nuair a smaointich mi teannadn
Ri moladh am Fàsaich,
Aite a's àillidh air thalamh;
Ged bhiodh Donnachadh Bàn Mac-an-t-Saoir
Bàrd gun fhaoilt air an talamh,
'S gann gu'm moladh e 'n Gàidhlig
Mar 'thoilleadh Fàsach 'n am ealadh.

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* Captain MacDonald's Estate.

IAIN DOMHNULLACH

(JOHN MACDONALD).

In volume xxi. of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness there was a paper read on the 26th November, 1896, for Mr Neil MacLeod, Edinburgh, the bard of the Society, entitled, "Beagan Dhùilleag bho Sheann Bhàrdachd Eilean-a' cheò," in which he relates some poems by the old Skye bards. Amongst others there is a song of eleven verses by the subject of this brief sketch. John MacDonald, better known as "Iain Mac Dhomhnuill-'ic-Alasdair," a native of Uig, in the Isle of Skye, was born about 1797. He began life by enlisting in the 42nd Highlanders. His father, however, not approving of his continuing the life of a soldier, bought him out of the army, and he returned to his native glen at Uig. He afterwards spent twenty-eight years at the herring fishing, and generally spent the winters at home. He composed a good many poems and songs, most of which are now difficult to recover. He died in 1875, at the age of seventy-five years.

The following are a few verses from one of his songs :—

Dh' éirich mise maduinn chiùin
'S gu'n thog sinn siùil ri garbh-chroinn,
Chunnacas dubhradh mòr is dùdlachd,
An dara taobh 'n uair dh' fhalbh sinn ;
'S gu'n shéid i bras le borb-thuinn chas,
'S i tighinn a mach gu gailbheach ;
'S i ruith le sùgh air bhàrr gach stùchd,
Ri togail smùid na fairge,

Bu mhath bhi 'n uair sin feadh na luachrach
Shuas aig àiridh Uige,
Far 'm bi na h-uain 's na caoraich luaineach,
Ruith mu'n cuairt gu siùbhlach ;
Mi fhin 's mo chruinneag ri mo ghualainn,
'S deamhais chruadhach dùint' aic',
Gach fear 's gille ruith mu'n cuairt
'S bhiodh Dòmhnull Ruadh le 'chù ann.

Sud an gleann 'is bòidhche sealladh,
Ann am maduinn reòta,
Le caoraich gheala, dhubh, 'us ghlasa,
Cuid dhiu tarr-fhionn, bròcach ;
'S bidh làir le'n searraich 'm bun gach bealaich
Suas ri srath nan lòintean :
'S a dh' aindeoin gaillionn no fuachd Earraich,
Cha 'n iarr mart ann cròdhadh.

'S iomadh caileag chuimir, ghuanach,
Tha ann ri cuallach spréidhe,
Le cuman 's buarach dol do'n bhuaile,
'S laoigh mu'n cuairt di 'geumnaich ;
B'e' n ceòl nach b' fhuathach leam an duanag
'Na suidhe luadh air clèithe,
Mi-fhin gu h-uallach 's piob ri m' ghualainn
'Cluich nan nuallan éibhinn.

'S iomadh caileag bhòidheach chuimir,
'Bhios 'nan suidh aig cuibhle,
Snìomh nan ròlag, 'séinn nan luinneag,
Bidh gach iorram bhinn ac'—
An snàth 'is bòidhche falbh bho 'm meòirean
Cothrom, còmhnard, sìnte,
'S am falt 'na chuaich air cheil an cluais
'S e togta suas le cìrean.

'N uair bha mi òg mu'n d' rinn mi pòsadh
Bha mi gòrach aotrom,
Falbh gu spòrsail 'measg nan òighean,
Sud an seòl 'bu chaomh leam ;
'S an té bhiodh còir 's a bheireadh pòg dhomh
Shuidhinn stòlt' ri 'taobh-sa ;
'S o' n té nach fuilingeadh ball'n a còir dhiom,
Gheibhinn dòrn mu'n aodann.

'N uair thig an geamhradh's àm nam bainnsean,
Gheibh sinn dram no Tòiseachd ;
Bidh Nollaig chridheil aig cloinn-nighean
'S aig na gillean òga ;
Na mnathan féin gu subhach, éibhinn,
'S iad a' gleusadh òran ;
'S bidh dram aig bodaich anns an fhodar—
Sogan orra 'còmhradh.

There are other four verses in a similar strain. The song gives a faithful picture of peasant life in his day, and, upon the whole, is an indication of considerable talent.

MACDONALD MUSICIANS.

Intimately connected with the bards were the musicians, especially the harpists, and in later times, the bagpipers and violinists. The last of the Highland harpists was a clansman, viz., Murdoch MacDonald, harper to MacLean of Coll. He studied with Rory Dall, in the Island of Skye, and afterwards in Ireland, and remained with MacLean as a harper until 1734, after which he retired to Quinish in Mull, where he died. He is still spoken of as "Murchadh Clàrsair," and his son was distinguished as "Eoin Mac-Mhurchaidh Chlàrsair."

The Rev. Patrick MacDonald, Kilmore, near Oban, was a famous violinist, and author of the first collection of the vocal airs of the Highlands, which was published in 1784, a work for which all true Highlanders will for ever feel grateful. This first great collector of Highland Music was born at the manse of Durness, in Sutherlandshire, on the 22nd of April, 1729, and died at Kilmore,

Argyllshire, on the 25th September, 1824, at the great age of 95 years.*

It is not known whether he composed any poems or songs, but his essay on "the influence of poetry and music upon the Highlanders" is a very able and exhaustive one, exhibiting much research and learning, and he was unsurpassed in his day as a violinist. His daughter, Flora, was a poetess, but I have not been able to procure any of her poems. A generation ago a great deal more than we now know could have been collected about the Highlands, but the harvesters were few in number, consequently a great deal has been lost for ever.

In Mr Baptie's "Musical Scotland," published in 1894, there are about twenty-five more or less famous musicians, some of whom were poets as well, the most famous of whom were the Rev. Patrick MacDonald already mentioned, and his brother, Joseph; Sir Alex. Lord MacDonald, born in 1743; John MacDonald, Dundee, author of "the Maids of Arrochar," nine famous minuets, and other pieces; Alexander MacDonald, born about 1770, author of "the notation of music simplified," &c.; Donald MacDonald, born about 1780, a son of John MacDonald of Skye, who had spoken to Prince Charlie, drew water from a spring for him, and killed trout for Dr. Johnson's breakfast, who knew the MacCrimmon system of articulate music, and lived to the age of 106. His son, Donald, was the author of the famous "Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Scotland," 1831. Malcolm MacDonald, Dunkeld, 1750, author of four collections of reels, &c.; and Hugh MacDonald, Glasgow, born in 1817, and died in 1860; he was an excellent poet, and is mentioned elsewhere; and several others until we come down to the famous Sandy MacDonald, of Skye, who also composed some songs, as well as having been a splendid violinist of Scotch music.

In order to complete my sketch of the MacDonald Bards and musicians this seems the most suitable place to mention some of the most famous MacDonald pibrochs.

Giraldus Cambriensis, who died in 1225, mentions the bagpipe as a British instrument, and Major represents the Scots at the battle of Bannockburn in 1314 as using tubae (tubes), Litui (clarions and cornets), and cornua (horns). MacKay also mentions that the piobaireachd known by the name of "Bealach nam Broaig," composed at that battle in 1229, is perhaps the oldest pibroch extant, though this species of music existed before then.

In the Chapel of Roslyn there is the sculpture of a cherub playing on a bagpipe, with a book spread before it, showing that in an early age—A.D. 1446, the date in which the Chapel was erected by William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney—the bagpipes were played not by ear alone, but from some musical notation.

The following are the most important MacDonald pibrochs:—

1. Piobaireachd Dhomhnuill Duibh †—Black Donald Balloch of the Isles' War-tune, when preparing for the battle of Inverlochy, in 1427; and "Spaidsearachd Alastair Charaich," — Alastair Carrach's March.

2. "Ceann na Drochait Mhòr," the head of the big bridge, was composed during the battle, 1431. It should be mentioned, however, that Donald Dubh, the Chief of the Camerons, was also present at the same battle on the side of the Royal forces, who were defeated. It was from this Donald Dubh that the Camerons derived their patronymic appellation of "Mac Dhonuill Duibh," or son of the Black Donald. ‡

3. "Ceann na drochait bhig," the head of the little bridge, or Clan-gathering, composed at the battle fought by Montrose against the Campbells in 1645, when the MacDonalds were again victorious.

4. "Làmh Dhearg Chlann Dòmhnuill."—The red hand in the MacDonald arms.

5. "Fàilte Chlann Dòmhnuill," "The MacDonalds' Salute," by Donald Mòr Mac Crimmon.

6. "Fàilte Chlann Raonuill," no "Failte Mhic Mhic Ailein,"—Clan Ronald's Salute.

7. "Caismeachd a' Phìobaire da Mhaighstir," no "Pìobaireachd Dhunnaomhaig,"—the pipers warning to his master, or Pìobaireachd of Dunyveg, 1646 or 1647.

8. "Muirt Ghlinne-Comhann," the Massacre of Glencoe, on 13th February, 1692.

9. "Fàilte Ridir Seumais nan Eilean"—Sir James MacDonald of the Isles' Salute, by William MacDonald of Vallay.

* For a biographical sketch of the life of the Rev. Patrick MacDonald, see a paper by the author in the "Celtic Monthly" for April, 1898.

† Logan's "Scottish Gael."

‡ Brown's History of the Highlands.

10. "Spaidsearachd Dhonuill Ghruamaich,"*—Donald Gruamach of Sleat's lament for the death of his elder brother.

11. "Leannan Dhonuill Ghruamaich" (Grim Donald's sweetheart.)

12. "A' Ghlas-Mheur,"—the finger-lock, on account of the intricacy of the grace notes rendering it more difficult to play than ordinary pibrochs, composed by Raonull Mac Ailein Oig, one of the MacDonalds of Morar.

13. "Cill Chriosda,"—Glengarry's March, played by Glengarry's piper at the burning of the church of "Cill Chriosda," or Christ's Church—where a number of people had taken refuge—in revenge for the murder of Aonghas a Ghaoil,† of the Glengarry family, by the Culloden people.

14. "Blàr Sròn" commemorates a desperate conflict between the MacDonells of Glengarry, and MacKenzies, at a place so called in Western Ross.

15. "Cumha na Piuthar,"—the sister's lament for the sons of Donald Glas XI. of Keppoch, who were murdered by the next in succession.

16. "Fàilte Fir Bhoisdail,"—a salute to Alastair Mòr MacDonald, first of Boisdale, upon his taking possession of the estate.

17. "Cruinneachadh Chlann Raonuill,"—the gathering of the MacDonalds of Clan Ranald to the battle of Sheriffmuir, in 1715, where the chief was slain.

18. "Cumha Raonuill Mhic Ailein Oig,"—Lament for Ronald MacDonald of Morar.

19. "Cumha Mhic Mhic Alastair,"—Glengarry's lament, by Archibald Munro.

20. "A' Bhòilich,"‡—the Vaunting, by Ronald MacDonald of Morar.

21. "Cumha Bhan-Tighearna Mhic Dhòmhnuill,"—Lady MacDonald's lament, by Angus MacArthur.

22. "A Mhic Iain Mhic Sheumais,"—celebrating a battle between the MacDonalds and MacLeods. There is also a fine "òran luaidhe" to the same when wounded, and sung to drown his moans.

23. "Blàr-léine,"—the shirt battle, fought at Kinloch Lochy between the Frasers of Lovat and MacDonalds of Clan Ranald and Keppoch, and so called from the parties having stripped to their shirts.

24. "Cumha Fear-Foghluim nan Dòmhnullach,"—the MacDonald's tutor lament.

25. "An Cath Gailbheach,"—the desperate battle fought at the Cuchullin Hills, Isle of Skye, between the MacDonalds and MacLeods.

26. "Là Blàr Druim-Thalasgar," the battle of Waternish, fought between the Uist MacDonalds and MacLeods of Skye.

27. There is also a fine lament, called "the Chieftains," to which words are sung, on the unfortunate death of the Colonel of Glengarry's regiment, who fell in the streets of Falkirk after the victory over the Royal troops in January, 1746, by the accidental discharge of the gun of one of Clan Ranald's men.

28. Besides the pibroch for the Keppoch tragedy, "Cumha na piuthar," there is a slow pathetic song of three unequal measures, called "A Cheapaich 'na fàsaich," Keppoch desolate—and

29. "Blàr Mhaol Ruaidh," or "Thug clann Dòmhnuill am bruthach orr'," to the battle of Mulroy, the last clan battle fought in the Highlands, in 1688.

30. There is also a Keppoch gathering called "An tarbh breac-dheirg" which resulted from the following incident :—On one occasion one of the Keppoch chiefs visited Locheil on some business, when the latter, who had an old score to settle, loosed a furious bull which he hoped would kill Keppoch, but the tables were turned, as Keppoch killed the bull. The pibroch begins :—

'Se an tarbh breac deirg,
'Se an tarbh breac deirg,
'Se an tarbh breac deirg a mharbh mi.

31. Alex. MacDonald's ("Mac-Allisdrum's) March" was composed by Alexander MacDonald, who commanded a party of Highlanders in the Irish service under Lord Taafe, at the engagement with the Parliament army, near Mallow, on the 13th of November, 1647.

32. There is also a "Cumha Fear Ceann Loch-Muidart," to MacDonald of Kinloch Moidart, in Ross's Collection, and several marches to MacDonalds—and last but not least (33) "Flora MacDonald's lament for Prince Charlie."

In Major-General Thomson's elaborate work there are the following additional MacDonald pibrochs :—

34. Angus MacDonald's Assault—"Ionnsaidh Aonghais Bhig Mhic Dhomhnuill."

35. Lady Margaret MacDonald's salute—"Fàilte Ban-Tighearna Mhic Dhòmhnuill."

36. Cumha Morair Chlann Dòmhnuill.

37. "Cumha an Ridire Seumas Mac Dhomhnuill, nan Eilean," Lament for Sir James MacDonald of the Isles, by C. MacArthur.

* MacDonald's "Martial Music of Scotland."
† Aonghas a choile Lagan, Vol. II.
‡ Angus MacKay's Collection of Ancient Pibrochs.

38. "Tha Clann Domhnuill Socharach" (The MacDonalds are simple).

39. "Spaidsearachd Mhic Dhomhnuill" (the March of the MacDonalds).

40. Cruinneachadh Chlann Raonuill (sliabh an t-Siorra,") MacDonald of Clan Ranald's gathering to Sheriffmuir.

41. MacDonald of Kinloch Moidart's salute.

42. "Uaille Chlann Domhnuill" (the parading of the MacDonalds.)

43. "Cumha Alastair Dheirg" (lament for Alexander MacDonald of Glengarry).

44. "Cumha Dhomhnuill an Lagan" (lament for MacDonald of Laggan).

45. Lament for Captain MacDonald.

POEMS AND SONGS IN HONOUR OF FLORA MACDONALD.

Flora MacDonald, the historic heroine in the last drama of the Jacobite period, and the deliverer of Prince Charles from the clutches of his enemies, was the daughter of Ranald MacDonald, younger of Milton, in South Uist. She was born in 1722, and was 24 years of age when she first met the Prince in the Long Island in 1746. Her patronymic was "Fionnghal, nighean Raonuill 'ic Aonghais Oig, an Airidh Mhuilinn," that is, Flora, daughter of Ranald, the son of Angus, younger of Milton. Her mother was Marion, daughter of the Rev. Angus MacDonald, "Am ministear làidir"—the strong minister—a mild, generous, and most hospitable gentleman. Her father was a cadet of the family of Clanranald, not very distantly related, and her grandmother was a daughter of MacDonald of Largie, in Kintyre, so that she was well connected on both sides of the house. She was the only daughter of the family, but she had two brothers. The elder, Ranald, a very promising youth, died from the bursting of a blood vessel—from an overstrain in rowing a boat against an adverse wind; so that the younger brother, Angus, succeeded his father at Milton, while her mother in 1728 married as her second husband, Hugh MacDonald of Armadale, in Skye, a captain of militia in the Long Island during the Prince's wanderings there. Flora's adventurous history began shortly after the Prince landed in South Uist in April, 1746, and before she ever saw him she and Lady Clanranald were constantly devising schemes for the safety and escape of the fugitive Prince. "Twelve powerful and trustworthy men who could acquit themselves by sea or land were selected by Lady Clanranald to be in readiness night and day in case their services might be required." Flora frequently conversed with these gallant Highlanders who had seen the Prince on several occasions, though she had not. One morning as two of them had come to Ormiclate to report how the Prince had passed the night, she met them at the door and asked them in Gaelic, "Am bheil e laghach?" Is he nice? "Am bheil e aoidheil?" Is he cheerful? "Am bheil e idir iriosal agus taitneach?" Is he at all humble and pleasant? On another occasion she jocularly remarked to them that she could direct them how to become far wealthier than Clanranald. "Oh, do tell us how that can come to pass. More wealthy than our noble chief!" Oh, yes, perfectly true," said Flora. "Go immediately and give up the Prince to my step-father, Captain Hugh MacDonald, and as sure as the sun is now shining in the firmament you shall have £15,000 a piece for your loyalty." The answer was short but decisive: "Nior leigeadh Ni Maith! Ochan! ged gheibheamaid an saoghal mu'n iadh a' ghrian, cha bhrathamaid ar n-òganach Rioghail gu bràth." "Goodness forbid! Alas! should we receive the world around which the sun revolves we would never betray our Royal youth."* Neither they would, and the writer does not believe that any genuine Highlander even at the present day would betray him, but he would not be answerable for the outsiders who now infest the Highlands. After an unsuccessful attempt to escape to Stornoway and return to Benbecula, and much negotiation and scheming between Clanranald and his lady, Boisdale, MacDonald, Baileshear, and Flora MacDonald, it was at last arranged—Captain O'Neil and Neil MacEachainn being all along faithful attendants, that the Prince should make his escape to Skye accompanied by Flora and Neil MacEachainn only, in which she nobly remarked to Lady Clanranald,—"Think not, dear lady, for a moment, that I consider my own

* Rev. Alex. MacGregor's Life of Flora MacDonald.

personal danger; certainly not, for I am ready and willing at any hour to peril my life to forward the enterprise, if you think that there is even a shadow of a chance of success. My only dread is not for myself, but for the ruin that may be entailed upon my noble friend, Sir Alexander MacDonald, if I succeed in conveying the Royal fugitive to his estates in Skye." After having secured passports from her step-father, Captain Hugh MacDonald, for herself, Neil MacEachainn, and a female servant, named Betty Burke (the Prince in disguise) and six boatmen, they proceeded at ten o'clock at night on Friday, the 27th *June, 1746, to the shore where it was previously arranged they should meet the boat. It was raining in torrents as it usually does among the Western Islands, and to their great horror they saw several wherries filled with armed men sailing within gunshot of the spot where they lay concealed, However, they gradually moved away. "About an hour after, their own boat rowed up with muffled oars to the spot where they were awaiting its arrival, and they immediately embarked on their perilous journey across the Minch to Skye, a distance of about thirty-five to forty miles (hardly so much). The whole channel was scoured by Government vessels, which made the undertaking much more dangerous, and to add to their anxiety, a tempest† arose a few hours after leaving the shore, accompanied by thunder and lightning, by which they lost their reckoning, having no compass—probably no one on board could steer by one if they had.

The boat was an open one, about twenty-four feet keel, and one of the best in the island, still she had enough to do in such weather, with seas rolling mountains high in the dead of the night. The rowers plied their oars steadily, though at times they instinctively exclaimed to each other, Ochan! is Ochan! is e tha garbh! is e tha garbh!" "Alas! alas! it is rough, it is rough." The Prince behaved nobly throughout, so did Flora. When they approached the point of Waternish, a promontory on the north west of Skye, they drew near land, when, to their dismay there was a large party of the MacLeod militia on the beach waiting their arrival! The crew shouted simultaneously, "Mach i! mach i! mach i! air ball!" "Out with her! out with her! to sea with her immediately!" The militia being disappointed, and having no boat fit to pursue, opened fire at once upon them and riddled their sails, and one ball cleft the handle of the helm, and grazed the steerman's fingers, but did no further harm. The Prince stood up and cheered the crew and told them not to mind the villains, and it took some time to induce Flora to sit on the ballast, which she refused to do so long as the Prince exposed himself. At last when the bullets were whizzing past their ears, the Prince, Flora, and Neil MacEachainn sat on the ballast flags, and remained in that position until the boat had got beyond the reach of danger. They landed safely in Skye on Saturday the 28th, at Kilbride, in the parish of Kilmuir, and within 500 yards of the house of Monkstadt, the residence of Sir Alexander MacDonald of the Isles, after a voyage of about sixeen or seventeen hours. There was a small cave under a shelving rock near the landing place in which the Prince took shelter, making a seat of Flora's trunk, while she, accompanied by Neil MacEachainn, walked at once to Monkstadt house, while for a short time the Prince was left alone in the cave, which some poet has recorded as follows:—

'Tis midnight! a lone boat is on the sea,
And dark clouds gather, but no thoughts of fear
Chill those brave hearts! A princely refugee
Disguised—a faithful maiden sitting near,
Upon whose cheek anon there falls a tear—
Fond woman's pledge of sympathy; a crew,
Trusty and gallant, labour at the oars.
The shifting wind white showers of sprey uprears
Like incense heavenward; the waters roar,
While from huge murky clouds the lurid lightning pours.

To add to their hair-breadth escapes Flora MacDonald found another party of Militia under Captain John MacLeod, son of Donald MacLeod of Balmeanach, at Monkstadt, but with excellent tact Flora managed to put the militia officers off the scent, and it was arranged that old Kingsburgh should accompany the Prince and Flora to his own place next day. Neil MacEachainn meantime supplied the Royal fugitive in his cave with refreshments and blankets. Several amus-

* In Brown's History of the Highlands, the 28th of June is the date mentioned, the same date is also stated in Vol. XXIII. of the Scottish History Society, and that there were only four boatmen.

† The Scottish History Society's account makes no mention of a tempest.

ing incidents occurred regarding the awkwardness of the Prince in woman's clothes, at which he himself laughed heartily on hearing the remarks made about him.

Sir Alexander MacDonald's cattleman entered the servant's hall at Monkstadt late in the evening in a very excited state, and exclaimed in Gaelic, "Lord preserve us! I saw a large female quickly traversing the fields betwixt this and the fort, with a long stick in her hand, with a curious hood on her head, and with a remarkable dress on her person. Undoubtedly she must be one of those whom the fairies had locked up in their chambers in the fort, who contrived to escape. I never beheld one to be compared with her in the shape of a worldly creature."

On the following afternoon,* on their way to Kingsburgh, the party were met by some country people returning from church, who, after saluting Kingsburgh, stared at the uncommon size and slovenly appearance of the Irish lass that strode so recklesslike along! Some remarked "O! faicibh am boirionnach neònach sin! Faicibh na ceuman mòra, fada, aig an nighean ghairbh, ghobhlaich sin! Ochan! nach dàna, slaodach, neo-sgiobalta, drabasta an sgliùrach i! Is cinnteach gur ann de shliochd nam famhair i!" O! see that strange woman! Behold the big wide steps of that rude, long-legged dame! Eh me! what a bold, untidy, slovenly, uncouth slattern she is! Surely she must be one of the giant race!†

James Hogg relates that on this memorable occasion in wading a rivulet Neil MacEachainn cautioned the Prince that he was not managing his skirt in feminine fashion, at which he again laughed heartily, and thanked him. Miss Flora MacDonald's maid also remarked, "Bless me, what lang strides she takes, and how awkwardly she wurks her petticoats. I dare say she is an Irish woman, or a man in woman's claes. I believe these Irish women could fecht as weel as the men."

It jars upon a West Highlander's ear to find "broad Scotch" put into the mouths of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. They never pronounced their English in Lowland Scotch, and don't do it now, except in those instances of people who have resided a long time in the Lowlands. This is not finding fault with the Lowland doric, which is a most expressive language, and, according to some, a most beautiful language. We only wish to keep it in its own place. The Highlanders have their own pronunciation, which is characteristic enough as will be seen presently.

But to return to the Royal party—they arrived at Kingsburgh about midnight, where the Prince was most hospitably entertained, and after discussing several bowls of punch* retired to rest at a late hour, and slept till two o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th. On being awakened, and after partaking of some refreshments, the party started for Portree, Kingsburgh accompanying them a part of the way,† Flora MacDonald having taken a different way in order to meet the Prince there. When some distance from Portree the Prince, dressed in a suit of Kingsburgh's to continue his journey, and on the latter bidding him farewell, he embraced Kingsburgh in his arms, and bade him a long and happy adieu, and in a most affectionate manner thanked him for his services. Tears fell from the eyes of both, and a few drops of blood from the Prince's nose. Kingsburgh was alarmed at seeing the blood, but the Prince told him this was usual with him on parting with dear friends. At Portree, on parting with the gallant Flora, he laid hold of both her hands and bade her a tender and affecting farewell, and thanked her for her generous aid. He then handed her his portrait in a gold locket, and said he hoped yet to meet her at the Court of St. James. Of this parting a poet sang—

> Amid the shells and shingle on the shore,
> The Stewart Prince and Flora met to part;
> "Devoted one," he said, "I love thee more
> Than tongue can utter; ever in this heart
> My fair preserver's name will hold a place:
> I hope, dear Flora, at no distant day,
> With mine the throne and honours of my race,
> I can in deeds thy noble deeds repay.
> Farewell! thou faithful one."

* The Scottish History Society's account says that the Prince went on to Kingsburgh on the day of his arrival in Skye. This is unlikely, on account of the distance and nature of the country,

† Rev. Alex. MacGregor's Life of Flora MacDonald.

* As the Prince did not seem inclined to go to bed, Kingsburgh got hold of the bowl to lock it up, but the Prince tried to prevent him doing so, and the bowl got broken between them. One half is now in possession of Miss Margaret Macalister Williamson of Glasgow.

† In the Scottish History Society's account there is no mention of Kingsburgh having gone part of the way with the Prince. It says his guide was a little boy named MacQueen. The writer doubts if this is correct. Kingsburgh would never allow such an important guest to be guided by a mere boy.

Another beautiful poem by "Fear Gheasto," MacLeod of Gesto, entitled "Farewell to Skye," describes the Skye scenery which our heroine loved so well, and in which her name is mentioned.

Farewell, lovely Skye, sweet Isle of my childhood,
Thy blue mountains I'll clamber no more,
Thy heath-skirted corries, green valleys and wildwood,
I now leave behind for a far distant shore:
Adieu, ye stern cliffs, clad in old hoary grandeur,
Adieu, ye still dingles, fond haunts of the roe,
Where oft with my gun and my hounds I did wander,
And echo loud sounded to my "tally-ho."

How painful to part from the misty-robed Coollin,
The Alps of Great Britain, with antlered peaks high,
Bold Glamaig, Coruisk, and sublime Scuirnagillin,
Make mainland grand mountains look dull, tame, and shy;
Majestic Quiraing, fairy palace of nature,
Stormy Idrigill, Hailleaval, and cloud-piercing Stoer,
And the shining spar cave like some beacon to heaven,
All I deeply lament, and may never see more!

Once more dearest Isle, let me gaze on thy mountains,
Once more let the village church gleam on my view;
And my ear drink the music of murmuring fountains,
While I bid to my old and my young friends adieu.

Farewell, Lovely Skye, lake, mountain and corrie,
Brown isle of the valiant, the brave and the free,
Ever green to thy sod, resting-place of my Flora,
My sighs are for Skye, my tears are for thee.

It is not known whether Flora MacDonald herself composed any songs, but the following Gaelic composition in MacKenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," was entitled and marked by a lady, "Miss Flora MacDonald's Lament for Prince Charles," amongst the author's M.S. collection of papers.

ORAN DO PHRIONNSA TEARLACH.

Fhir ud 'tha thall mu àiridh nan Comhaichean,
B' fhearr leam fhin gu'n cinneadh gnothach leat,
Shiùbhlainn Gleann-laoidh a's Gleann'-Comhan,
Dà thaobh Loch-iall a's Gleann'-tadha leat.

Chorus.

Hillirin hò-rò ho bha hò
'S na hillirin hò-rò ho bha hì,
Na hillirin hò-rò ho bha hò,
Mo leann-dubh mòr o'n chaidh tu dhiom.

Shiùbhlainn moch leat, shiùbhlainn ana-moch,
Air feadh choilltean, chreagan, a's gharbhlach;
O! gur h-e mo rùin an sealgair,
'S tu mo roghainn do sluagh Alba.
Hillirin hò-rò, etc.

A Thearlaich òig a' chuailein chiataich
Thug mi gaol dut 's cha ghaol bliadhna,
Gaol nach tugainn do dhiùc na dh' iarla,
B' fhearr leam fhin nach faca mi riamh thu.

There are other four verses in MacKenzie's version, p. 373 of the "beauties," but they bear internal evidence of not having been composed by a person of such refined feelings as our noble, heroic, and maidenly Flora MacDonald undoubtedly possessed. Besides, the last verse mentioned that her brother and father had been killed. We must, therefore, search for the real author on the mainland.

A native of Kilmaluag in Skye, informs me that when she was a child she used to delight in being with a good old man above 80 years of age, who would tell her tales and sing songs as a reward to herself and other children for helping him to herd the cows and keep them on their own pasture. From him she learned the song to Prince Charles, somewhat different from MacKenzie's, but evidently the same song. It was composed by neither a bard nor a lover, but by a loving peasant woman—assuming a fictitious character and sorrow to beguile the pursuers of her unfortunate Prince, and set them off his track. When Prince Charlie was wandering on the mainland somewhere behind Arisaig, he was closely pursued one day, and contrived to get unperceived into a hut, where the goodwife immediately recognising him, took her wool and spinning wheel, hiding him at the same time by covering him with her skirt and whatever coverings were at hand—carding with great diligence—she began to sing the following lament in tearful and pathetic strains so as to give the men outside the impression that the Prince must now be far away. As she alluded to having seen a party after him yesterday, they did not enter the dwelling, but were satisfied to lean against the opening between the thatch and the wall which served the purpose of a window, and listen to the song to which they raised the chorus "Na-hi ibh ò," at the end of each verse. Afterwards singing the poor woman's song as they went on their way, they gave it a kind of celebrity, which as a lyric it did not merit. In course of time its origin was forgotten, and some masculine verses were added. The old man associated in his youth—back in 1700—with people familiar with the incident which gave ris to the song, which, of course, he never forgot.

THE OLD MAN OF KILMALUAG'S VERSION OF "ORAN DO PHRIONNS' TEARLACH."

Fhir sin tha thall, 'an tìr-nan-Athaichean,
B'fhearr leam fhéin, gu'n cinneadh gnothach leat!

Shiùbhlainn Gleann-Laoich, 'us Gleann-Comhan leat,
'S reidhìnn dh'am dheòin troimh Choiriche-Buidhe leat.
Na hì ibh ò !

Fhir sin 'tha thall 'an Tìr-a'-Gharbhlaich,
Shiubhlainn beann 'us gleann leat anmoch ;
Bha mi uair bu tu mo shealgair
'S ghabhainn thu'n roghainn air rogha fir Alba,
Na hì ibh ò !

A Thearlaich òig, a Mhic Righ Seumas,
Chunna' mi tòir mhòr an dé ort,
Iadsan gu sùbhach 's mis' gu déurach,
Uisge mo chinn 'cur dìth air mo léirsinn,
Na hì ibh ò !

James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," one of our best Jacobite bards, also gives "The Lament of Flora MacDonald," translated from the Gaelic, and remarks that he got the original from his friend, Neil Gow, who told him it was a translation from the Gaelic so rude that he could not publish it with the old air. Hogg versified it anew, and improved upon it without altering one sentiment. The following are a couple of stanzas from it :—

Far over yon hills of the heather so green,
And down by the Corrie that sings to the sea,
The bonnie young Flora sat sighing her lane,
The dew on her plaid, and the tear in her e'e ;
She looked at a boat with the breezes that swung
Away on the wave like a bird of the main,
And aye as it lessened she sighed and she sung,
"Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again,
Farewell to my hero, the gallant and young,
Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again.

"The moorcock that crows on the brow of Ben Connal
He knew o' his bed in a sweet mossy hame ;
The eagle that soars o'er the cliffs o' Clan-Ronald,
Unaw'd and unhunted, his eyrie can claim ;
The Solan can sleep on his shelf of the shore,
The cormorant roost on his rock of the sea.
But oh! there is ane whose hard fate I deplore,
Nor house, ha', nor hame, in his country has he ;
The conflict is past, and our name is no more,
There's nought left but sorrow for Scotland and me."

This poet, who by the way, persists in putting broad Scotch into West Highlanders' mouths, and in calling Neil MacEachainn Flora MacDonald's servant, has come nearer the uneducated Highlanders of old method of pronouncing English in "Prince Charles and Flora MacDonald's welcome to Skye," somewhat exaggerated :—

"There are two ponny maytens,
And three ponny maytens,
Come over the Minch,
And come over te main
Wit te wind for teir way,
And te corrie for teir hame,
Let us welcome tem pravely
Unto Skhee akain.
Come along, come along,
Wit your poatie and your song,
You two ponny maytens,
And tree ponny maytens,
For to-night it is tark,
And te red coat is gane,
And you're pravely welcome
To Skhee akain."

The above song was copied verbatim from the mouth of Mrs Betty Cameron, from Lochaber, a well-known character over a great part of the Lowlands, especially for her great store of Jacobite songs, and her attachment to Prince Charles and the chiefs that suffered in his cause, of whom she never spoke without bursting into tears. She said that the song was from the Gaelic, and James Hogg thought it had been translated by herself. No trace of the original now remains, which is not at all surprising, as a great change came over the whole Highlands shortly after the 'forty-five. Many of the people emigrated, some from disgust, others from compulsion. Those most implicated in the rebellion would be the most likely to preserve such a relic, and when these left their native country the song probably left with them, and probably perished on some foreign and inhospitable shore. Several other poets have also sang the praises of Flora MacDonald—Sir Walter Scott and Professor Ayton in their works of fiction have alluded to her in glowing terms. MacCodrum, the Uist poet, who never praised any woman, sang in her favour, and John Campbell, the Ledaig poet, wrote a beautiful Gaelic poem in her honour of which the following is a free translation :—

'Mid the pomp of huge London her heart was still yearning
For her home in the corrie, the crag, and the glen ;
Though fair be the daughters of England, the fairest
And stateliest walks in the land of the Ben.

What poet may praise her! her virtues to number,
Would baffle the cunning of pencil and pen ;
Though fair be the casket, the jewel is fairer—
The best of true hearts, for the best of good men.

She is comely and kind, and of graceful greeting,
Erect and well girt, as a lady should show,
And a heart with warm blood, and a pulse ever beating,
With loving reply to the high and the low.

On the occasion of her marriage another poet sang :—

A Fhionnaghail chaoimh chaoimhneil,
'S tu sgàthan gach maighdinn,
'S an reul-iùil 'tha toirt soillse
Dhaibh dh' oidhche 's a lò ;
'S oigh uasal air chinnte,
An rìbhinn ghlan òg,

De Chlann Dòmhnuill do-rìreadh,
An rìbhinn ghlan òg ;
'S gur àilleagan ciatach
An rìbhinn ghlan òg.

She died on the 5th of March, 1790, universally beloved and lamented.

It is needless at present to add any more to her noble self-sacrifice, and imperishable name and fame. Appended is a song to Flora MacDonald's father, by Angus Campbell, an Uist poet :—

ORAN FIR AIRIDH-MHUILINN ;

ATHAIR FHIONNAGHAL DHOMHNULLAICH A DH'FHALBH LEIS A' PHRIONNSA.

Slàn iomradh do'n mharaich'
A chunnaic mi seachad an lé,
Mac ud Aonghais Oig bheachdaidh,
Cha b'e 'n t-iomrall leam tachairt riut féin ;
Fear gun iomluaisg' 'na aigne,
Bha gu sìobhalta, stàideil 'an e éill,
Aig a' mheud s a bha 'thlachd ort,
Cha d'fhuaradh dhuit masladh no beum.

Slàn o chunnart sud dhàsan,
Cha tèid duine 'g a àicheadh nach fiòr,
O'n 's i'n fhìrinn a b' fheàrr leat,
'S o'n 's i'n acfhuin a gnàthaich thu riamh ;
Mheud 's a fhuair mi dhe d' chòiread
Ann an comain an eòlas nach b'fhiach,
Nì mi 'n uiread 's ad chòmhnadh
Fhad 's is urrainn do m' chòta 'ga dhìol.

Gheibhte sud am beul feasgair,
Ann ad fhàrdaich-sa, beadradh a's mùirn
Bùird mhòra 'gan leagadh,
A's an àirneis bu deis as an cionn
Bhiodh na deochanna brasa
'G am brosnuchadh seachad air thùs,
Anns na eupanna breaca,
Is fir òga 'g an aiseag gu dlùth.

Gheibhte sud ann ad fhàrdaich
Ceòl fidhl' agus dàna 'cur leis ;
Tigh nan uinneagan clàraidh,
Far am faigheadh na h-àraidhean meas ;
Dhòmh-sa b' fhurasda ràdhainn
Gu'm b'e sud mo cheòl-gàire car greis,
Cha bhiodh cuideachd mar dhàimh ort,
Bhiodh tu fhéin 'n ad cheòl-gàire 'n am measg.

There are other three verses in the song, but the air to which it was sung is not stated. The song complete is to be found in Sinclair's "Oranaiche."

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In bringing these remarks concerning the MacDonald Bards—who have been separated from the other clan bards—to a close, it must not be inferred that there were no MacDonald bards prior to the middle ages.

Though we have no record of any, it is more than probable that numbers existed. At any rate, there were bards in abundance amongst all the Celtic tribes, but the injunction of the Druids not to commit anything to writing, though they had an alphabet upwards of fourteen hundred years before the Christian era, must have caused a considerable amount of Celtic literature to be lost after their own extinction. Equally calamitous was the burning of Iona no less than seven times with most of what was precious in it. In the time of Saint Columba the bards were so numerous that they had to be restrained and restricted to singing to the glory of God, honour of the country, praise of heroes and females, and exaltation of patrons and followers. The era of Ossian is fixed in the third century, and he speaks of "the bards of old," showing that there were poems well known in his day which were then reckoned ancient. From the beginning of the 5th century there were numerous bards, the remains of whose works are still extant. The antiquaries of Wales enrol in their lists the names of several who are assigned an antiquity so remote that a degree of scepticism is excited as to their existence, and the Irish writers lay claim to national poetry three thousand years old.*

The "Albanach Duan" delivered at the coronation of Malcolm III., in 1056, which can't be disputed, consists of 21 verses, and proves that metrical compositions existed in Gaelic before 1056 ; for it bears traces of having been formed from older records, though it does not mention Fingal or his heroes. From the earliest dawn, however, of regular literature in Scotland, references are common enough to the Ossianic heroes. Barbour, the historian of Robert the Bruce, in 1375, mentions Fingal, and Gaul, the son of Morni. Dunbar, also in 1503, and Gawin Douglas before 1522, as well as Hector Boece in 1520,

* Dr. O'Connor.

all mention the fame of these heroes, and in 1576, in the first book printed in Gaelic "Knox's Forms of Prayer and Catechism," Bishop Carswell, the translator, alludes with pious severity to histories extant and popular in the Highlands concerning warriors and champions, and Fingal and his heroes.

In the Dean of Lismore's book, the manuscript of which was written before 1537, and still to be seen in the advocate's Library, Edinburgh, are to be found many incidents, and whole passages which occur in MacPherson's translation. Of these are the death of Oscar, the tales of Cuchullin and Conlach, and Fainasollis, the Maid of Craca, with reference to many other of the heroes of Ossian ; several of these compositions preserved by the Dean are headed "The author of this is Ossian." *

The writer has read most of the arguments for and against the authenticity and antiquity of the Ossianic poems that have been published, and notwithstanding all that has been adduced against them, he is firmly convinced of their genuineness, and believes that they belong to the era claimed for them, or, at any rate, are very ancient, for the following reasons :—

1.—Because James MacPherson was considered by people who knew him to be incapable of producing them, though likely enough he linked some of them together, and took the usual liberties allowed to a translator. The same applies to his coadjutor, MacPherson, Strathmashie. Both were fairly clever men, but the genius of a poet like Ossian was not in them.

2.—The internal and external evidence to be found in the poems is against the possibility of their having been composed in modern times. The author lived in a world of ghosts, warriors, and hunters, with no allusion to a pastoral state of society as we now understand it, no tillage, no flocks of cattle, sheep or goats, milkmaids, shepherds, small game, fishing, salmon, etc., so frequently alluded to by modern Gaelic poets. These were beneath the notice of Ossian. His hunters were of the deer and wild boar. An allusion to a white bull and a chariot does not constitute a pastoral state.

3.—The absence of any allusion to Christianity which would be sure to produce a powerful impression upon an uncultivated people, is very significant. Any one writing for literary renown could hardly avoid some allusion to it directly or indirectly.

4.—The ideas are sublime, the descriptions unusually graphic beyond anything else known to us, and the references to caves ; and the "narrow house," caol-taigh nan leac—the grave of flagstones, or stone coffins; and halls of shells, and feasts of shells, point to an ancient state of existence prior to the use of crockery and cutlery, etc.

5.—As it is quite clear MacPherson could not possibly have foreseen that his translations would have created such a furore in the literary world, it is extremely improbable, in fact certain, that he was nothing more than a translator, and even if he did add a few lines, which has by no means been proven, it would not affect the authenticity of the poems as a whole. Start with a theory to suit idiosyncrasy, with arguments based on the structure of a fluctuating ancient language no one seems to know very much about, and unwritten ancient history, and it is quite easy to arrive at a conclusion favourable to the propounder.

6.—Because it has been proven by the Highland Society, and other independent individuals, that many Ossianic poems existed over a great portion of the Highlands long before MacPherson's time.

7.—Because the Highlanders always had a sort of veneration for these ancient poems that they did not have for fabulous and romantic tales, fairy tales, and tales of superstition, and they were quite able to distinguish between them. The unwritten history of the Highlands consisted of family tales, feudal tales, deeds of bravery, gallantry, and hunting exploits. These they stored carefully in their memories, and repeated them with pride.

8.—Because the bards have done orally for Highland history what writing has done in some other countries. The bardic order were the depositories of such knowledge, they accompanied the warriors in battle and recited their deeds, and they carefully preserved the best of it, and handed it down to their successors.

* Introduction to Ossian's Poems, by G. Eyre Todd.

9.—Because the great majority of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders who have lived amongst the people most of their lives, and have listened to their tales, and who are not so blinded by prejudice and scholarship as to forget the ancient state of society among the people, knowing their customs and habits, and the great changes that have come over them within the last two hundred years, believe the great majority of the poems to be genuine.

10.—Because the few Gaelic-speaking scholars who express doubts as to their authenticity generally, follow some other Celtic scholar, generally of the German type, who, by nature of his nationality and prejudices, is incompetent to decide the question—barring an exception like Dr. August Ebrard.

11.—Because whoever composed the Ossianic poems it was not James MacPherson, and as MacPherson did not compose them, the next most likely individual was some ancient author. There may have been several Ossians, as there have been several Burnses, but there was only one great Ossian and one great Burns.

12.—Because Celtic scholars don't always agree among themselves they can never decide the question, and many of those most prejudiced against the authenticity of the Ossianic poems, are men who reason entirely from the philological side of the question, ignoring tradition entirely, and hence can't be impartial critics.

13.—Because there is no evidence worthy of the name to show that these poems were compositions which first saw the light within the last two centuries. So great an author's whereabouts, &c., could not have escaped within such recent times. We know who the author of "A' Chomhachag" was, and it is more than three hundred years since he lived; why then don't we know more about poems that were treasured by the people like a religion, if they are of such recent date.

14.—The names, ideas, descriptions, and subjects, are all in favour of antiquity, and of having preceded the clan era. If the ancient Gaelic ballads up to the third century are genuine, why not the Ossianic poems?

15.—Because arguing mainly on philological grounds is as likely to be wrong as right, it is almost certain that the composer of Ossian's poems did not intend to impose upon and deceive future generations. Such a thing would never enter the head of such a natural genius.

16.—He who pins his faith on orthography is also equally likely to blunder; because a great deal would depend on the scholarship of the reciter, and the person writing down the poems. So long as the order of the bards held together they were safe enough, but when the traditional poems came to be handed down by the general public, some changes at least would most likely take place. There is no evidence at all to prove that Ossian and his heroes were myths.

17.—Though it is impossible to say when these poems were composed, there is no reason to doubt that they were not founded on facts; and the whole tenor of the poems indicate a very early state of society—the earliest in our history—and taking a comprehensive and impartial view of the whole subject, and bearing in mind the early Norse invasions, the poems seem to date back at least as far as that period.

18.—Because it is certain that the Gaelic is the original language of these poems, and the best of them were known in the Highlands before MacPherson's day, and to make him the author of them is, in the language of the late Dr. Clerk, "utterly absurd."

One strange thing in connection with the controversy over the authenticity of the Ossianic poems is, that though MacPherson deposited the MSS. of the original at his publishers, Messrs Becket and De Hondt, Strand, London, and advertised in the newspapers that he had done so, no one ever went to see them, though they had lain, as Becket certifies in the Literary Journal of 1784, in his shop for the space of a whole year. It is little wonder, therefore, after such contemptuous treatment, that MacPherson should have maintained a sullen silence, or even caused the MSS. to be destroyed so that all trace of them would be lost for ever! When a man, smarting under such scorn, loses his temper, the convenience and interest of future scholars is about the last thing that would affect him, especially after having been called an imposter, a forger, and a liar! The Dean of Lismore's book

proves that more than 350 years ago Ossian was then held to be an ancient poet and the "King of Song," and Fingal "the hero of heroes."

Dr John Smith's "Sean Dàna" also show that there were other ancient poems in the Highlands attributed to Ossian, Orran, Ullin, &c., independent of MacPhersons collections, and their having been known to the Irish puts their authenticity beyond a doubt. In the writer's opinion the original character of the poetry is in itself strongly in favour of its antiquity. It deals with man in a very primitive state. "There is no allusion to agriculture, or commerce, to arts or sciences, to laws or ordinances. There is not the remotest reference to Christianity, or to any of the great moral and social changes which it brings in its train. There is no abstraction or generalisation of ideas. Objects are dealt with individually as they present themselves at the first glance. And least of all is there a trace of that subjective self-reflecting, moral picturing of the outer world which we find in the poetry of modern days." "Ossian describes the face of nature simply and purely as it impresses itself on his eye, without a trace of self-colouring the image, but he depicts the image so vividly and clearly as to show the true poetic vision. Many of his descriptions are unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any other poet, ancient or modern."*

As regards the language of the original poems, though the vocables seem the language of modern times, Dr. Clerk held that the syntax is certainly ancient. The Norse language, as Professor Müller testifies, remained unchanged for seven centuries, and the Greek language has undergone no vital change for two thousand years—these are exceptions. Where the Celtic scholars flounder is in drawing too hard and fast a line. There was a Monkish and a bardic Gaelic, and the vernacular would in time be bound to differ in some respects from the learned dialect written by scholars. A Kintail man, an Arisaig man, a Skye man, and a Lewis man can all be easily distinguished by their dialects, some of these would spell some of their words differently, recite differently, and would have some differences in their written MSS. of oral traditional poetry. In a charter written in Gaelic in May 1408, and granted by MacDonald, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross, to Brian Vicar MacKay, there is only one word in it that has become obsolete. In the "Book of Deer," written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there are entries where the adjective is placed before the substantive, and where two or three spellings of the same word occur in the same sentence.* Another thing that must never be forgotten is that in early times, out of all the fearful trouble and confusion that existed, men were always to be found, especially in the church, apart from the bards, who devoted themselves to the preservation in literary form, with a tendency to moral edification, of the ancient songs and legends of their country, bringing them out in new versions to meet the changing conditions inherent in all nations, and their languages, and committing them to parchment as the most certain means of their preservation, but many circumstances intervened to alter this order of things as regards the Ossianic poems. The severance of the ties between Ireland and Scotland, the Norse rule for centuries in the West, the anglicising of state and church, and the severe repression of all that partook of Paganism, and Popery, by the Protestant Church, the original Gaelic became gradually almost unintelligible to the people, who still, however, remembered, sang, and recited portions of them in a more or less connected manner, though they may not have been written, and in correct grammatical form, as may be seen in the Dean of Lismore's phonetically spelt Gaelic.

The fragments of Ossian's poetry, of such unequal merit, gathered and published by MacPherson, were the living remains of the endeavours of bards and scholars to transmit to posterity what they had themselves learned from their predecessors. MacPherson's error was in presenting these portions of songs and recitations, as complete compositions, and of having come down thus intact from the days of Ossian.

I believe with many Highlanders capable of judging, that Fionn (Fingal) was a great chief in remote times, beyond the dawn of written history, and his son Ossian, a great bard, and moral power for heroism and noble feeling. A language that was not expressed in written signs in their time, their deeds would come down at first in a tradi-

* The Poems of Ossian, by the Rev. Archd. Clerk.

* Ibid—Dr. Clerk's Ossian.

tional form, and as those who cherished their remembrance were changing in their circumstances, little could be transmitted word for word at the end of a period of nearly 2000 years exactly as it had been originally recited or sung.

Another singular circumstance is that there is no allusion in the whole poems to the voice of singing birds, which must have been as tuneful in days of old as they are now. There is mention of the "hum of the mountain-bee," and the "droning dance of the evening fly," "The birds of night are startled by the loud sound of Fingal's shield,* and the flight of the sea birds is noticed, but no reference is made to any bird of song. The eagle is the only bird specially mentioned, and of all the dwellers of the waters the whale alone is mentioned. Modern Gaelic poetry abounds in descriptions of singing birds, as well as of the salmon—"the monarch of the flood."† These omissions are unaccountable, unless on the supposition that men's minds in these early times were occupied entirely with war and the chase.

I was born and bred in Skye, spoke Gaelic as soon as, if not before, English. I knew all about the people as well as one of themselves. I have listened hundreds of times to their stories, songs, and recitations of some of Ossian's poems, by individuals who knew little or no English, and who believed they were handed down from remote ages, a belief in which I heartily concur against all that has been said by scholars in the past, or that can be said at the present day, or in the future, and I further believe that outsiders,‡ and especially foreigners are utterly unfit to dogmatise on the subject or to settle the question.§

Whether poetry preceded prose or not, we can't say with certainty, but the ethics of poetry were delivered and orally preserved in pithy rhymes, and in this way the earlier decrees of Greece were promulgated, and remained for ages ere they were engraven on tablets in the public ways, and even then the metric form was not abandoned, nor did the people find another word for law than verse.* Though the attachment to oral record was strong, the predilection for rhyme was still stronger, even after writing had come into use.

The Brehons, or Gaelic judges, delivered their decrees in sententious poetry, and St. Columba, who is himself believed to have been of the bardic order, and other early ecclesiastics, delivered their moral precepts in impressive verse.†

It was in this style of composition that the Gaelic genealogies of the Scottish Kings, repeated by the seanachies, were formed. In Wales many moral triplets are confidently ascribed to the Druids, and in the Highlands many such apothegms, handed down from the sean' ir, or men of antiquity, are of similar origin. The Druids, like the Pythagoreans, were most careful to exercise the memory, and it was a positive law that there should be no written record; so it is probable that it was after the time of the Druids so much of the early poetry was lost.

The Gael frequently met for the purpose of friendly contest in the repetition and singing of their ancient poems, and poetic talent was one of the most respected accomplishments.‡

Dr Johnson describes a Highland amusement indicative of the poetic spirit, where a person enveloped in a skin enters the house, when, the company affecting to be frightened, rush forth; the door is then closed, and before they are admitted, for the honour of poetry, each must repeat at least one verse. The young men who celebrate the festival of "Calluinn," bringing in the New Year, are obliged to recite an extempore rhyme before they are admitted to any house. In the writer's younger days he has more than once seen a similar practice. On Hogmanay night, "Oidhche Callaig," all the men about the place collected, and having fastened a dried cow's or sheep's hide on the back of one man, he ran

* Reminding one of the African savages sounding the "great nogara" (drum), a practice which must have existed for thousands of years.

† Dr. Clerk's Ossian.

‡ I am aware that a few insiders also follow the German school of critics, but they will always be in a minority as men who are incapable of sifting circumstantial evidence.

§ NOTE.—Captain Alexander Morrison of Skinnidin, Skye, who copied out a lot from Gaelic MSS. for James MacPherson, as he could neither write nor spell the language properly, declared that he could no more compose the Ossianic poems, or anything like them, than he could have written the prophecies of Isaiah, or created the Isle of Skye: Life and Letters of James MacPherson, by Bailie Saunders.

* Wood on The Genius of Homer.

† Dr MacPherson's Dissertations.

‡ MacKenzie's Introduction to the Beauties of Gaelic Poetry.

round the house followed by the others, who belaboured the hide with sticks or clubs, shouting "Calluinn è, Calluinn ò, Calluinn a' bhuilgean 's an tota," and after several rounds they came up to the front door, when the head man delivered a duan of considerable length, after which they were admitted and got refreshed with bread and cheese and whisky, often followed by a dance. The "Dronn," already mentioned in a former paper, at a feast was called the bard's portion, and whoever secured it was obliged to compose a verse. This is called "Beannuchadh Bàird," or the Bard's blessing, and it was customary to give a metrical salutation as a mark of respect. A composition in praise of one whose kindness or hospitality had been experienced was an equally common effort of the muses.

"The War-Song of the Gaul," in the fourth book of Fingal, shows the usual style of the "Prosnachadh Catha," which is the name applied to it, corresponding to the Irish "Rosgu Cath," and the Welsh "Arymes prydain."

"The address of the great chief of the Caledonian confederation, Galgacus, delivered to his troops previous to the great battle of the Grampians, is highly interesting for its antiquity, the eloquence it displays, and the light it throws on the sentiments of that unconquerable race to whom the Britons of the south alleged the gods themselves were scarcely equal. The famed Caractus would animate his forces in a similar manner, and it is probable both delivered their harangues in verse, and may have been of the bardic order." "The strife was truly kindled by the songs of the bards." "Go, Ullin, go, my aged bard! remind the mighty Gaul of battle—remind him of his fathers—support the yielding, fight, for the song enlivens war," says the King of Morven. The chiefs of Clan Ranald retained a bard until the middle of the last century, when Lachlan Mac Nial Mhuireach, the 17th in regular descent, lost his farm, and dropped the profession, which his ancestors held so long, as useless. Iain Breac MacLeod of Dunvegan, Skye, who died in 1693, was the last Highland chief who upheld the ancient state by numbering in his retinue a bard, harper, a piper, and jester. About 1690 John Glas and John MacDonald*, the bards of two lairds in different parts of the country, met by appointment in Lochaber to vindicate in a poetical contest their own excellence and their chief's honour, but the result has not been related.

"Music and poetry seem to be inherent qualities in the Celtic race, and their poetical genius and artistic advancement have often been subject of remark. Pastoral occupations and an Alpine situation are congenial to both. The mountains of Bœotia were the favourite abode of the muses, and the Arcadians, who were the Highlanders of the Peleponesus, became famous in the most early ages for their poetry and music." "The Gaelic language is well adapted for poetry, and it is evident that the ancient poets did not cramp their genius by adherence to any rule, although there was an attention to rhyme and cadence."

The music and poetry of the Highlands are to a certain extent inter-dependent on each other, separately either may be beautiful or affecting, but combined they are unsurpassed by any other nation. The Rev. Edward Davies, author of "Celtic researches," "The claims of Ossian considered"—a most bitter assailant of the venerable bard—remarks that "the Fingal and Temora upon subjects so interwoven with the feelings of the people, set this corner of the island far above poetic competition, not only with any Celtic tribe, but, we may say, with any nation in Europe. What people now existing can boast of epic poems so interesting, so original, so replete with generous sentiment, and at the same time so nationally appropriate? The man who believes himself descended from Fingal, from either of his heroes, or even from the nation which produced such characters, must be a degenerate wretch indeed if he can do otherwise than think nobly and act honourably."

"The Celtic poems were generally framed by the bard to suit the melody of the harp, the instrument sacred to the order, and to its music they were sung." The Ossianic class of poetry is usually sung or chanted in a kind of recitative, executed with the gravity due to such revered compositions. An old Highlander considered it becoming to take off his bonnet when reciting them, and the term laoidh, or hymn, by which many are distinguished, indicates the veneration with which they were regarded. The High-

* Probably Iain Lom.

landers were accustomed to sing at all their employments, and it was an excellent stimulus, serving also to relieve the irksomeness of labour. Those Highlanders of Greece, the Arcadians, were remarkable for a similar practice, and it is thus very rationally accounted for by an ancient historian whose observations are applicable to the Gael."* Singing is useful to all men, but truly necessary to the Arcadii, who undergo great hardships; for, as the country is rugged, their seasons inclement and their pastoral life hard, they have only this way of rendering nature mild and bearable; therefore they train up their children from their infancy until they are at least 30 years of age, to sing hymns in honour of gods and heroes. It is no disgrace to them to be unacquainted with other sciences, but to be ignorant of music is a great reproach.†

There is nothing more remarkable in the Gaelic mode of singing than the repetition of a verse, or one or two lines, or sometimes a part of one, in a chorus which adds much to the effect, and is a great means of diffusing a knowledge of songs, as by repeatedly joining in them the whole must soon be impressed upon the memory. These tunes, or Luinigs, are simple and touching, and the effect in a harvest field is particularly pleasing. The person who sings leaves the chorus to the others, who all join, the leader taking up each succeeding verse: the same applies also to waulking songs. The "Iorrams," or boat songs, are sung by sea-faring men to alleviate the labour of rowing, time being kept to the motion of the oars, and to hear them in the distance on a beautiful summer or autumn evening, is most charming, the crack of the oars being heard at the same time. The bagpipes produce a similar effect when heard under the same conditions. These things have a charm for, and influence over, Highlanders that nothing else has. While on the subject I may mention that some of these Iorrams have never been equalled in any other language. There are no sea-songs at all comparable to "Iorram Chlann Raonuill," by Alexander MacDonald, and "An Dubh Ghleannach," by Corporal Alexander MacKinnon. They tower like mountains over such productions as "The Bay of Biscay, O," "The battle of the Baltic," "Trafalgar," "The Death of Nelson," "Tom Bowling," and all the best British songs. They are in fact untranslatable. Owing to the vivid pictures they give of storms, &c., there are no words in the English language that would convey an adequate idea of the Gaelic description. At social entertainments all these chorus songs are sung by the whole company, who join hands or by passing handkerchiefs from one to another, each holding a corner, and bringing the closed fist down upon the table, or upon the knee, keeping time to the song. The slower and older songs were generally formed for the harp or voice alone, as there could be no accompaniment to the bagpipes, and of course apply to a period perhaps anterior to the introduction of pianos and violins.

Female beauty was always a very congenial subject for bardic eulogium. The berries of the mountain ash afforded a simile for the complexion of health; and snow or the "Canach," the white flossy down of the mountain cotton, a plant that grows in moors and marshy ground, with the plumage of the swan or sea-gull, for the fairness of the skin.

Bu ghile bian na canach sléibhte
No ùr sneachd air bharra gheuga.*

The following is an instance:—"The star of Gormluba was fair. White were the rows within her lips, and like the down of the mountain under her new robe was her skin, circle on circle formed her fairest neck. Like hills beneath their soft snowy fleeces, rose her two breasts of love. The melody of music was in her voice. The rose beside her lip was not red; nor white beside her hand, the foam of streams. Maid of Gormluba, who can describe thy beauty? Thy eyebrows, mild and narrow, were of a darkish hue; thy cheeks were like the red berry of the mountain ash. Around them were scattered the blossoming flowers on the bough of the spring." "The yellow hair of Civadona was like the gilded top of a mountain, when golden clouds look down upon its green head after the sun has retired. Her eyes were bright as sunbeams; and altogether perfect was the form of the fair. Heroes beheld and blessed her.

The poems which detail the calamities of war,

* MacKenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry."
† Polybius IV.

* Bàs Airt 'ic Ardair—Smith's Antiquities, p. 350.

deaths of heroes, disappointments of lovers, ravages of storms at sea, and other tragic events leave a deep and enduring impression which is reflected in the songs and melodies of the bards. They rather gave way to a feeling of melancholy, and in this mood many of their best productions were executed, though they were by no means devoid of the faculty for producing convivial, humorous, and satirical effusions. Being inured to all sorts of trials and griefs, they could sing "Pleasant is the joy of grief! it is like the shower of spring when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf lifts its green head." The sensitive bards are represented as at times bedewing the harp strings with their tears, while repeating the sad story which the sterner chiefs could not listen to unmoved. "The joy of grief belongs to Ossian amid his dark brown years. Green thorn of the hill of ghosts, that shakest thy head to nightly winds, I hear no sound in thee: Is there no spirit's windy skirt now rustling in thy leaves? Often are the steps of the dead in the dark-eddying blasts, when the moon, a dun shield from the east, is rolled along the sky."† Again the poet breaks forth—"I am alone at Lutha. My voice is like the sound of the wind when it forsakes the woods. But Ossian shall not long be alone; he sees the mist that shall receive his ghost; he beholds the cloud that shall form his robe when he appears on the hills. The sons of feeble men shall behold me, and admire the stature of the chiefs of old; they shall creep to their caves."‡

The songs of Deardra are held by the Irish to be of equal, if not greater antiquity than those of Selma. As the poetry of a kindred people, it is similar in character, as the following quotation shows:—

"Farewell, for ever, fair coasts of Albion, your bays and vales shall no more delight me. There oft I sat upon the hill, with Usna's sons, and viewed the chase below. The chiefs of Albion met at the banquet. The valiant sons of Usna were there, and Naesa gave a kiss in secret to the fair daughter of the chief of Duntroon. He sent her a hind from the hill, and a young fawn running beside it. Returning from the hosts of Inverness, he visited her by the way, my heart was filled with jealousy when I heard the news. I took my boat and rushed upon the sea regardless whither I should live or die."§ This is the "Clan Uisneachan" of the Highlanders.

From this pardonable digression I must return once more to the great Clan Donald, and I can assure each member of the clan that it has been a labour of love to me sifting out the effusions of our clan bards, and some of the glorious deeds of our ancestors, so graphically depicted in their songs and poems. And while sensible of the inadequate manner in which my subject has been treated — the material being widely scattered, and some of it difficult to collect—still I hope that I have left the subject in a less chaotic state than I found it, and if many names have been omitted, some others have been brought to light that otherwise would probably have been lost. Our bards have done noble work in the past, and have always held the foremost place, while the great sept from which we sprang is a clan of whom we are all justly proud, as being the greatest, the most renowned, and perhaps the most ancient family in Great Britain.‖

† Temora. ‡ Berrathon.

§ Nalson, Introduction to the Irish language, 1808.

‖ Note—Professor MacKinnon in opening the Celtic class at the University of Edinburgh at the commencement of last session, 1899, with a lecture on the Lords of the Isles, remarked that "the family of which these great chiefs became the acknowledged head was a power in those parts from the earliest times. The native genealogists traced the line back to Conn-Ceud-chathack, who is said to have been monarch of Ireland about the first century of the Christian era, and they located the family in the Hebrides before the period of the Dalriadic immigration. It is historically certain that the ancestors of the MacDonald chiefs were powerful in the Isles and on the western seaboard during the Norse occupation of the Hebrides."

THE END.